BEYOND 'CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCES'

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Abstract

The term 'consumption experience' has become ubiquitous in marketing and consumer research circles. In this thesis I question the appropriateness of this canonical term. In its stead I employ the non-dualistic term 'experiaction', coined by an ecological psychologist, which points to the functional inseparability of experiencing and actions.

I adopt a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed, perspective, whilst participating in, analysing, and writing about ten video-recorded research conversations. Likewise I address the various spin-off texts deriving from the initial conversations, such as transcripts and viewing-logs. I show that 'field'-embedded individuals notice and act on many aspects of their immediate micro-environments, including their own intra-personal goings-on and expressive outputs.

Through data analysis I identify five categories of regulable variables that an individual can act on as s/he seeks to regulate his/her sensing, relative to his/her reference value(s). Seen through this cybernetic lens, momentary human being comprises of a cyclical, ongoing process of self-regulation, in which individuals

expediently employ and/or modify accessible resources and goings-on, in the service of seeking to actualise their currently-preferred, or expected, states-of-being, and to minimise unwelcome deviations therefrom.

This thesis challenges the prevalent notion that when people consume particular products/services these offerings sponsor offering-dedicated experiences - what some people describe as 'consumption experiences'. The concept of experiaction, in contrast, comprises of an ongoing interaction between a person and his/her micro-environment, in which the individual attends to, and acts on, whichever aspect(s) of his/her 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' become(s) momentarily salient to him/her, within the parameters imposed by his/her currently-sustained reference value(s).

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Thanks also go to the ten people who volunteered to help with my research. Each individual watched a short movie with me before we had a one-to-one video-recorded conversation.

And finally I wish to thank my wife Sonia. She has taken a keen interest in my work, has shared the highs and lows, and has participated in many valuable-to-me hours of academic pillow talk.

Endless energy is exhausted in the manipulation of marks on paper

- Perls *et al* (1951, p. 316)

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Preface

Given the atypical manner in which I undertook and presented this research project, I have written this preface to explain to prospective readers the kind of reasoning that informed how I approached the research as a whole.

Near the beginning of my project I read several books written by Fritz Perls - a co-founder of Gestalt therapy - with a view to finding out how best to explore human experiencing. Perls stresses the here-and-now immediacy of the Gestalt approach - how human experiencing always unfolds in the unstoppable present moment.

As I reviewed the consumption-related literature, it gradually dawned on me that what consumer researchers call 'consumption experiences' emerge as consumers encounter some combination of commercial and non-commercial phenomena. Whilst eating in a restaurant, for example, any conversing that accompanies the meal, contributes to what the diners experience whilst eating. We can think of the speaking, itself, as a creative/productive act that involves a consumptive (listening) aspect. Thus a person's act of speaking-whilst-dining contributes to what s/he, and other participants, experience(s) at that juncture. Surely, then, to call what people experience in a restaurant 'consumption experiences' constitutes, at best, a one-sided characterization?

This way of thinking, in time, led me to abandon the term 'consumption experience' and to instead adopt the non-dualistic term 'experiaction' - a neologism that points to the functional inseparability of what we experience and what we do. By combining experiaction with the Gestalt-derived here-and-now perspective, I arrived at the even-more-inclusive term 'experiaction-in-situ'. In

contexts involving interacting beings we can augment the term still further, hence 'inter-experiaction-in-situ'.

Watching a movie, as part of the research process, constituted experiaction that involved watching, listening, sensing, and note-making. When I subsequently read the notes-I'd-made-whilst-watching-the-movie, I again experiacted in this new note-reading scenario, making a second set of notes as I read. By documenting during-research 'goings-on', at successive stages of the research, I regularly encountered fresh experiaction-triggering 'data'. My thesis takes the form that it does, then, not least because I endeavoured to include, within it, representations of the multi-layered experiaction briefly described here.

The thesis documents an exploratory, learning-by-doing, process, during which I attempted to arrive at an aesthetically pleasing and philosophically consistent presentational style. Towards the end of the project I had come to view the thesis-writing itself as the preeminent experiactional process. The thesis-writing - like the restaurant scenario mentioned earlier - combined creative action with ongoing, evaluative, receptivity to the created 'material'. I could then, if I chose to, immediately alter what I had written, in the light of my ongoing appraisal of it. Amatucci (2013, p. 242) wrote:

> In traditional qualitative research, data is conceived as an object on which the researcher acts. Whether that object fits into a traditional category - an interview transcript, field notes - or a transgressive category - a dream or memory - data are still nouns, things to be apprehended by the senses. In my postqualitative work, data are not entities, not nouns subject to process. Instead a process - writing - is the data.

Although I stopped short of eschewing conventional data wholesale, I did seek to broaden the scope of what might pass as research-relevant, by including a diverse sample of what I noticed (and how I acted) whilst researching.

To recap; what I wrote contributed to what I momentarily experienced whilst writing. The nature of that momentary experiencing, in turn, informed how I amended and/or developed the emerging text. Rather than viewing data as a fixed 'done-deal' - a 'thing' encountered and analysed - an experiactional view highlighted the way in which *whatever* I noticed, whilst encountering traditional data, constituted an aspect of my whilst-encountering-traditional-data experiaction; whatever I 'did' at that stage formed the other, complementary, experiactional aspect. In this way I reconceptualised 'consumption experiences' as 'experiaction' and then applied this experiactional-way-of-thinking to what we ordinarily think of as 'data collection' and 'data analysis'.

In a nutshell, this meant that I moved away from thinking in terms of the 'consumption OF something or other' - such as an audio-visual recording or a transcript - and towards focusing on the 'experiaction that occurred WHILST engaging with such phenomena'. What one experiences and does WHILST engaging with, say, research notes, exceeds simply an experience OF those notes. You will note that an 'experience OF' demands a specific focal 'object' (something 'consumed'), whereas the 'experiacting-WHILST' perspective posits a relation of concomitance between experiencing, acting, objects, and scenarios. To experiact WHILST, say, watching a movie, entails all that one experiences and does at that particular time-place, in relation to a host of noticeable particulars. This type of thinking, more than anything else, accounts for the somewhat unconventional document before you.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis focuses on human being, which, as we all know, entails (a) experiencing and feeling, and (b) acting/behaving. Rolf von Eckartsberg (a psychologist) coined the term 'experiaction' to describe, in a unitary fashion, the inseparable twin roles of experiencing and acting (von Eckartsberg 1978, p. 200-201). In the consumer research and marketing domains the term 'consumption experience' has become ubiquitous. Consumer researchers and marketers talk, for example, in terms of "experiential consumption" (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, p. 135) and "customer experience" (Carbone and Haeckel 1994). And, as an indicator of how the tendency has spread, I recently read an article on the "student experience" (Butterworth 2013, p. 10).

Five years ago I set out with a view to studying people's 'consumption experiences'. I soon recognised the difficulty, though, of trying to isolate the parts of a person's full-blown experiencing that we can attribute to the products/services consumed, from those aspects of the same full-blown experiencing which do not derive from the product-/service-use. It seemed to me that whatever happens during the consumption of a product/service gets, nominally, co-opted into the overarching 'consumption experience'. In effect, the designated product or service, whether a ballpoint pen or a meal out, becomes the phenomenon from whence any concurrently-experienced goings-on take their name - the 'ballpoint-pen-using experience' or the 'eating-out experience' for example. One may think of this as a product-/service-centric orientation, since the product or service used comes to rule the,

proverbial, roost - at least in terms of how one describes a particular experiential episode.

I adopted what has become known as a 'field theoretical' orientation (Parlett 1997). This involved thinking of people as contextualised beings who may, moment-by-moment, alight on (or attend to) any aspect of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' that they co-constitute. Thus when, say, watching a movie, a person may momentarily focus on inner-self indigestion just as readily as on the movie screen. Seen from this perspective, what a person experiences, from moment-to-moment, will depend on what s/he attends to, as well as his/her manner of attending. I found it increasingly untenable to talk and write in terms of 'consumption experiences'. I could not see how a designated object-of-consumption, say a tin of soup, could single-handedly sponsor a so-called 'consumption experience'. As I wrote earlier, it seemed clear to me that non-commercial phenomena would contribute to the full-blown experiencing that one sustains at any given point in time.

Viewing experience and action as functionally inseparable, I began to ask why we don't talk in terms of 'production experiences' as well as 'consumption experiences'. Indeed, some marketing scholars do talk in terms of 'prosumption' - the fusion of production and consumption (Xie *et al* 2008, p. 116). I considered this option, but the term 'prosumption', for me, strongly connotes commercialism. By adopting the term 'experiaction' I avoided an overtly commercial characterisation of human being.

By the time I embarked on my video-recorded research conversations, in July 2011, I had long since rejected the term 'consumption experiences'. As far back as 23rd October 2009 I drafted an article called, "Anyone would Think that Consumption

Experiences Actually Exist". To summarise, I rejected the notion of 'consumption experiences' because: (a) the term nominally leaves out the non-commercial aspects of any human experiencing; (b) human experiencing inescapably entails a behavioural dimension, thus in some cases (perhaps many cases) the term 'production' (or still better 'creation') more accurately describes what human being entails; and (c) I felt uncomfortable characterising human experiencing as 'consumption experiences'.

Given my field-theoretical outlook, it would have seemed inappropriate to have focused my research efforts on people's responses to a particular product or service, such as a movie. As I said earlier, even whilst watching a movie a person will attend dynamically to different parts of his/her 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'. And so I set the video camera rolling and initiated conversations without a predetermined topic. I did this on the premise that, as with other types of conversations, the individual participants (including me) would follow their moment-to-moment interests. I took the view that this dynamic selection process, itself, constitutes an interesting and indicative phenomenon.

I amassed around 18½-hours-worth of audio-visual recordings, having conversed with ten different individuals. Ironically, the resultant audio-visual recordings would have made good candidates for the category of 'consumable texts' - which sponsor 'consumption experiences' when viewed - had I chosen to go down that route. But, as I said, I had already ruled out this orientation. However, during a, subsequently published, email exchange that I initiated with a distinguished marketing professor (Woodward and Holbrook 2013), it became apparent that what the professor called 'consumption experiences' exactly coincided with what I, at that time, called 'full-blown human experiencing'. To the professor the

terminology used mattered only in relation to the perceived marketing-domain-relevance of one's work. Thus, a 'consumption experience' - as an 'object'-of-study - sits more comfortably within the domain of 'consumer research' than does 'full-blown human experiencing' (or 'experiacting'). In the case of the latter, then, the relevance of one's work may come into question - even though one may study the 'same' underlying phenomenon.

However, in calling human experiaction 'consumption experiences', I consider the labelling issue more than simply a matter of professional expedience. Indeed, a 'consumption experience' characterisation of human being can have consequences in terms of how individuals think of themselves and other people. Arguably, once we begin to think in terms of self-as-consumable-product and others as consumables, something profound has occurred in the way human beings relate to themselves and others

And so, my personal avoidance of using the term 'consumption experience' [whenever I use it I put it in inverted commas to indicate that I do not accept it as a naturalized, unproblematic term] constitutes a political act on my part. Although I do not participate in party politics, I happen to think that the politics of language-use does matter, and has implications both personal and social.

I've spent the last few years, then, problematizing what I now see as the expedient rebranding of an important aspect of human being. I view human subjectivity as one of the few regions of the world that doesn't have commercial sponsors and publically-seen logos emblazoned on it. In a small way I have made a stand against the colonization of the human realm by 'commercial speak'. Some

would consider that battle already lost, but one does what one must.

1.2 Outline of Thesis

You will find a detailed literature review, [Chapter 2] in which I explore the origins of the notion of 'consumption experiences'. In the marketing, and consumer research, literature I found warrant for treating human interaction, itself, as a form of one-to-one marketing (Bagozzi 1975, 1977). By looking at my thesis through a consumer researcher's eyes one will see how everything I have written, more-or-less, relates to marketing and consumer research. However, my philosophical/methodological approach (field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed) [Chapter 3] ushered me toward a here-and-now/moment-by-moment orientation, and, as I've said, a potentially 'field'-wide level of focus. My data analysis thus began with a systematic documentation of what I noticed whilst watching the audio-visual recordings of the research conversations that I had participated in [Chapter 4].

During my studies I unexpectedly encountered cybernetic theory - a term that used to connote, for me, such things as computers and *Robocop* (1987). However, in cybernetic theory I found the central model for my thesis - a model that links perceiving and behaving in a manner that corresponds with the linking of experience and action in 'experiaction', mentioned earlier. On the back of this discovery I realised that the phenomena that I had noticed during data analysis - what I, at that time, called 'homeostasis' - fitted hand-in-glove with the cybernetic model of negative feedback (Powers 1973, p. 252). [Chapter 5]

I then identified five variables - 'access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression' - that people may act on whilst experiacting. [Chapters 6-10] Thus the cybernetic model that I adopted (and subsequently customised) potentially relates to every moment of everyone's daily living. For example, I lock my door when going to bed, thus regulating 'access' to my apartment; this engenders, within me, a sense of safety-from-intruders. I arrange piles of academic papers on the unused half of my double bed ('configuration'); this facilitating ergonomic accessibility to the articles. I open all the bedroom curtains during the day to ensure a maximum amount of natural daylight ('levels'); this facilitates eye-strain-free reading and writing. I buy a reputable brand of flavoured spring water ('association'); I thus reduce the risk of a stomach upset in the final days before summiting my thesis. And, finally, I select, moment-by-moment, what I express ('expression') and how to express it ('configuration'); in this way I manage my authorial voice. In short, momentary being comprises of acting in conjunction with the five types of variables that I have just exemplified. I devote a chapter to each of the variables mentioned above, although in life they intermingle.

In addition to conducting the research conversations, one of my supervisors said that she would like to see how my approach to research might apply to a more conventional 'consumption' context. To this end I visited a cinema in Leeds - three times during the same weekend - to watch, and re-watch, David Cronenberg's film *Cosmopolis* (2012). You will find a chapter focused on and around those cinema visits. [Chapter 11]

After summing up in relation to my five data chapters, I finally reveal my customised version of the cybernetic negative feedback loop. [Chapter 12] I use it as a means of theorising the notion of

'experiaction'. You will find more rudimentary versions of the negative feedback loop diagram at strategic points earlier in the thesis. In spite of the mechanistic terminology, the cybernetic model strikes me as eminently human in it implications. By rebranding the customised cybernetic model as 'experiaction' I hope to assuage unwelcome reactions that the term 'cybernetics' might otherwise trigger within some people.

In my concluding chapter, [Chapter 13] just when theoretical parsimony may have dictated an exclusive focus on the experiactional model, I reopen a can of worms opened briefly at the end of my methodology chapter. I believe that this so-called adverbial theory has a bearing on, what Ariely and Norton (2009, p. 477) call, "psychological consumption". This putative consumption of thoughts and feelings constitutes just the point at which I part company with the consumption metaphor. I present this adverbial way of thinking as a taster, and as a possible avenue for future research.

1.3 Concluding - Limitations and Contribution

I have worked in a 'soft' area of research, in a theoretically-warranted, touchy-feely manner. When I say that I noticed something or other, no one can decisively discredit my testimony. Much, then, hinges on my good faith as a researcher. As a reader you will gauge the authenticity and value of my account, and evaluate my contribution accordingly.

What do I hope to have contributed? Well, I have sought to produce a readable, carefully-argued, substantiated, candid, and sustained account of a project that brought into question one of the staple concepts in marketing, and consumer research. The

alternative-to-'consumption-experiences' model that I posit positions consuming as just one of the many activities that humans engage in. On the downside, some may feel I have not stayed close enough to the 'data'. But in experiacting from moment-to-moment, and addressing the most salient-to-me issues as they arose - relative to my 'reference values' - I have lived the model that I here espouse. In doing so I feel that I have stayed as close to my (phenomenological) here-and-now 'data' as possible.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introducing the Review

In this review I begin by discussing products and brands, along with the mental images and concomitant experiences that products and brands contribute to. The widening definition as to what constitutes a product or a service has led some academics to question whether we can indeed maintain a tenable distinction between commercial and non-commercial aspects of life.

I go on to demonstrate that the concepts underpinning marketing have, according to some specified people, a universal applicability. These people suggest that the processes and techniques of marketing equate with the more general processes of identification, persuasion, and, ultimately, interactions and exchanges in which individuals and groups seek to proffer and receive 'offerings' and 'services' which other individuals and groups find valuable in some way or other. This 'value' primarily manifests as the (hopefully) affirmative experiences that people host during exposure to (or use of) multifarious 'value propositions'. In the light of the blurring between commercially- and non-commercially oriented goings-on, I begin to question the use of the term 'consumption experience', even in consumer research.

2.2 Product/Brand Image

2.2.1 Product/Brand Distinction

> Products are made in the factory […] but brands are made in the mind.

- Walter Landor, quoted in Klein (2000, p. 195)

In the factory we make cosmetics, in the store we sell hope.

- Charles Revson quoted in Collins and Skover (1996, p. 73)

The opening quotations cast products as 'material' and brands as 'mental'. Similarly, Bullmore (1984, p. 236) writes, "A product can usually be assessed objectively: by *Which?*, for example. A brand can be assessed only *subjectively*: does this object or service please *me*?" However, Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 34) include 'institutional figures' and 'ideas' in their list of phenomena which they define as products. Kotler and Levy (1969a, p. 12) augmented Gardner and Levy's list to include people in general - including the 'self'. Kotler (1972, p. 51) extended the list still further to include 'places' as consumable products. More recently, Addis and Holbrook (2001, p. 64) encouraged us to view phenomena such as: the Internet, household pets, and even planets, as consumable products. Table 2.1 shows this broadening of what we classify as products, as seen by some prominent academics. Clearly we have now moved beyond the notion of products as simply factory-made phenomena.

Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 34) include 'brands' in their list of products. In like manner, Keller (1998, p. 4) states:

> *A brand is a product, then, but one that adds other dimensions to differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need.*

Gardner & Levy (1955, p. 34)	Kotler & Levy (1969a, p. 12)	Kotler (1972, p. 51	Addis & Holbrook (2001, p. 64)
Brands	Physical Products	Goods	Personal Computers
Media	Organisations	Organisations	Internet
Companies			
Industries			
Institutional Figures	People (including self)	People (including self)	Household Pets
Services	Services	Services	Automatic Teller Machines
Ideas	Ideas	Ideas	
		Places	The sun, moon, and stars...

Table 2.1 Types of Products

And Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 13) write, "The experience *is* the brand. The brand is co-created and evolves with experiences." For them the experience that a person has whilst consuming an offering "*is*" the brand. This definition flies in the face of the definition of the term 'brand' given by the American Marketing Association and quoted in Keller (1998, p. 2). It defines the term 'brand' as a:

> […] name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition.

According to this definition, a brand comprises of the 'elements' [extended by Keller (1998, p. 131) to include: names, logos, symbols, characters, packaging, slogans, and jingles] which identify and differentiate particular goods and services from other similar offerings. In the light of this definition, a brand, necessarily, comprises of the palpable aspects of an offering. If a consumer can not perceive/register any identifying characteristics or differentiating features, when addressing a branded offering, then the brand has not fulfilled its primary functions, of identification and differentiation. It soon becomes apparent that seeking to distinguish between the terms 'product' and 'brand' may prove

problematic. However, as Luck (1974, p. 72) wrote, "Let us plunge further into marketing's semantic jungle".

Some authors do not distinguish between the terms 'brand' and 'brand image'. Indeed, when I contacted Professor Ramaswamy, in relation to his aforementioned co-quote, and asked him, "Do you use the terms 'brand' and 'brand image' synonymously?", he replied, "So yes, in that sense the brand and brand image are synonymous although it begs the question 'what is a brand' and 'who defines it'?"[1] So when Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 13) wrote "The experience *is* the brand." They could [according to Ramaswamy's email to me] equally have written, 'The experience *is* the brand image'. Similarly Moore (2002, p. 44) wrote, "Your brand must become your customer experience, and your customer experience must become your brand." Thus the brand, according to this quote, takes the form of a person's experience whist s/he engages with an offering. In terms of Luck's aforesaid (1974) marketing-as-a-semantic-jungle metaphor, it does not seem so useful to venture into the jungle and 'simply' describe the entanglements found therein. One hopes, perhaps, to find or create a clearing. In this regard Dobni and Zinkhan (1990, pp. 110-111) note:

> As a point of clarification, it should be noted that in many of the works on this subject, [of brand image] authors have tended to use the word 'product' interchangeably with 'brand'. While it is acknowledged that in marketing there is normally an important difference between these two concepts, the writings on imagery have blurred this distinction by using both terms in the context of distinguishing one competitor's product from another. These terms are similarly used here (as synonyms), unless otherwise stated.

[1] Ramaswamy, V. (2008), Email to M. N. Woodward, "Re: Brand or Brand image?", 21/08/2008.

Although Dobni and Zinkhan allude to an "important difference between these two concepts" ['product' and 'brand'] they do not spell out this difference. And, as I have shown in my opening salvo of quotations, the distinction between the terms 'product' and 'brand' seems less than straightforward.

As seen in Table 2.1, certain authors have sought to popularise an increasingly expansive definition of what constitutes a product. For example, Kotler (1972, p. 47) wrote, "A product is something that has value to someone. Whether a charge is made for its consumption is an incidental rather than essential feature defining value." More recently Shepherd (2005) sought to encourage marketing academics to apply themselves to the notion of 'personal branding', which he defines as (p. 589), "[…] applying to people the same marketing and branding principles originally developed for products and corporations […]". He goes on (p. 590) to credit Peters (1997) with having "virtually invented" the notion of personal branding.

By viewing each party in a social interaction as a product (in this broadened sense) one can treat the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of each party as contributing to the overall 'value proposition' (Vargo and Lusch 2004, p. 11), which inheres in a particular social context, and from which both parties derive positive and/or negative value. Vargo and Lusch make the point that the vendor can only offer a proposition of value, not value per se. Each consumer must generate his/her own value (positive and/or negative) by translating the 'value proposition' into a valued experience. By viewing the 'offering' - comprising of what each vendor-consumer provides, along with any 'incidentals' or environmental 'givens' - we genuinely do enter into a realm of co-

creation. [See section 2.5.4 of this review] Thus, whilst authors may differ about the distinction between a product and a brand, this debate need not detain us further here, having registered an awareness of some of the features of this debate, and having found a precedent for viewing people, and their self-expression, as products amongst other products.

2.2.2 'Image'

Just as confusion reigns in the literature regarding the distinction between the terms 'product' and 'brand', so the terms 'product image' and 'brand image' form part of a constellation of similar, but differently-named, concepts. As Holbrook (1983, p. 1 of 11) wrote:

> The terminology used to discuss product imagery might be characterized as a sea of confusion, awash in such ill-defined and overlapping concepts as 'brand image,' 'product positioning,' 'differentiation,' 'unique selling proposition,' 'visual and imagery systems,' 'pictorial content,' 'creative copy claims,' 'imagination,' 'customer benefits,' and 'differential advantage.'

Dobni and Zinkhan (1990, p. 111) delineate a set of concepts closely allied to the concept of 'brand image', but which have different labels/names: "symbolic unity", "perceived product symbolism", "brand personality", "brand character", "personality image", "the social and psychological nature of products", "brand meaning", "psychological meaning", and "the messages communicated by products". In an attempt to introduce a modicum of manageability into this review, let me return to Gardner and Levy (1955), the text that marketing lore positions as the one that introduced the concept of product/brand image. [See, for example: Dobni and Zinkhan (1990, p. 110), Barich and Kotler (1991, p. 95), and Levy (1999, p. 128).]

Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 35) write in terms of, "the attitudes and feelings which make up the image of a product and a brand." They go on to write (p. 39), "[…] a product image is the result of many varied experiences. They all make their contributions, for good or for bad […]" Thus, unlike Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), and Moore (2002), quoted in the last section 2.2.1, [who equate the brand image with the consumer's experience whilst consuming an offering] Gardner and Levy (1955) define product/brand image as the accumulated effect of "many varied experiences", culminating in a "body of associations". In this way Gardner and Levy characterise product/brand image as that which resides in consumers' memories in relation to a particular product. Akin to Gardner and Levy (1955), Reynolds and Gutman (1984, p. 29) adopt a definition of brand image which positions it as the, "stored meanings that an individual has in memory […]". This stands in marked contrast to viewing the product/brand image as a real-time experience.

As stated by Dobni and Zinkhan (1990, p. 117), in their review article, the, "definition and operationalisation [of 'brand image'] have been fairly irregular, although not without some patterns and commonalities." They go on to delineate the essential features of brand image (p. 118):

- Brand image is the concept of a brand that is held by the consumer.
- Brand image is largely a subjective and perceptual phenomenon that is formed through consumer interpretation, whether reasoned or emotional.
- Brand image is not inherent in the technical, functional or physical concerns of the product. Rather, it is affected and moulded by marketing activities, by context variables, and by the characteristics of the perceiver.

- Where brand image is concerned, the perception of reality is more important than the reality itself.

The reader will note that Dobni and Zinkhan's summary accords with the sentiments (expressed and implied) in the quotations at the very beginning of this review - Klein (2000, p. 195), and Collins and Skover (1996, p. 73), "Products are made in the factory […]" etc., - except that Landor, the author of the first quote, uses the term 'brand' where Dobni and Zinkhan use the term 'brand image'.

Another important distinction comes into play when we consider whether the 'images', held-within (and experienced by) individual consumers, have enough in common to enable marketers/researchers to talk in terms of 'the' brand image, as against 'an' individual's image of a brand. Reynolds (1965, p. 75) makes the point that, because people differ in terms of their prior knowledge, their creativity, and what they choose to focus on whilst consuming an offering,:

> […] images are statistical in nature. Different people will have different images of the same product; the number of people with a particular image is always a percentage and not the total population.

Bullmore (1984, pp. 236-237) makes the same point in a slightly different manner:

> A brand's image is what people think and feel about it: and those thoughts and feelings will not - cannot - be universally identical […] The image resides in the mind of the beholder - and it is conditioned at least as much by the nature of that beholder as by the nature of the object itself.

On the same topic Keller (1998, p. 49) writes:

> If someone asked you what came to mind when you thought of Apple computers, what might you say? […] The associations that come to mind for you would make up your brand image for Apple […] Different consumers might think of different associations for Apple, although many associations are likely to be shared by a majority of consumers. In that sense, we can refer to 'the' brand image of Apple, but, at the same time, it must be recognized that this image may vary, perhaps even quite considerably, depending on the particular groups of consumers involved.

The reader will note that, in this quote, Keller has implicitly adopted a definition of 'brand image' based on the mental associations that people have in their memories. Elsewhere (p. 93) Keller explicitly defines the term 'brand image' thus, "[…] perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory." Here, again, we can see how one's definition of a product/brand image informs one's approach to researching/operationalising the phenomenon. The reader will also note that Keller's definition of the term 'brand image' focuses on mental/cognitive activities within consumers. It thus tends to encourage an exploration of what comes to 'mind' rather than what occurs within the perceiver's organism as a whole. Furthermore, Keller assumes that, "many associations are likely to be shared by a majority of consumers." This does not accord with Hirschman (1981), who found that, on average, only 50% of respondents coincided when stating their 'top of the mind' mental association for each of a number of product names. For movies the figure dropped to 23%, and rose to 88% in relation to dairy products. Thus Hirschman found that shared associations diminished for cultural products, such as movies and music, and increased for more-utilitarian goods, such as dairy products, and clothing. She attributes this discrepancy to the relative complexity of cultural offerings, along with the more idiosyncratic concomitant construal thereof. The quoted statistics relate to the percentage of respondents stating the same most-

frequently-mentioned mental association in relation to each named product in the study.

Given that Gardner and Levy's (1955, p. 35) definition of the term 'product/brand image' includes the, "ideas, feelings, and attitudes that consumers have about brands", we can see that 'feelings' figured alongside 'ideas and attitudes' in their conception. Interestingly, Hirschman (1984, p. 115) writes:

> Humans are endowed with two essential modes of consumption - thinking and sensing. On a personal, subjective level almost all acts which involve the consumption of products have as their outcome the stimulation of our thoughts and/or senses. Viewed at this most abstract of levels, consumption may be cast as the process which provides the individual with cognitive and sensory experiences.

Thus Gardner and Levy's (1955, p. 35) definition of product/brand image ["ideas, feelings, and attitudes"] accords with Hirschman's (1984, p. 115) definition of experience ["thoughts and/or senses"]. In other words, one may see Gardner and Levy's original definition [viewed in the light of Hirschman (1984, p. 115)] as focusing on consumers' 'experiences' of 'a brand element(s)' [name(s), logo(s), design(s) etc.]. Thus the original conception of product/brand image focused on the experiences ["ideas, feelings, and attitudes"] triggered within consumers through their exposure to brand elements during product use and research. Although the experience(s) hosted by consumers during actually consuming the branded offering itself (along with related adverts, and word-of-mouth etc.,) may contribute to this 'image', Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 39) positioned these phenomena as distinct from the product/brand image itself, "[…] a product image is the result of

many varied experiences. They all make their contributions, for good or for bad […]".

The, so-called, 'experiential view' in marketing-thought, widely attributed to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), [See, for example: Arnold and Thompson (2005, p. 869), Carù and Cova (2007, p. 3), and Friedmann (1986, p. 1)] differed from the product/brand image concept, in that it focused, at least initially, on the experiences consumers had whilst consuming offerings. As Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 137) noted:

> By focusing on the configuration of activities involved in consumption, this viewpoint calls attention to the experiences with a product that one gains from actually consuming it.

Subsequently this focus broadened to include experiences hosted by consumers during the acquisition, and disposal of offerings too (Holbrook 1995, p. 101). Carù and Cova (2003, p. 271) quote Arnould *et al* (2002) who suggest that researchers might also focus on 'pre-consumption experiences', along with 'remembered consumption experiences'. However, it seems to me that whether a person consumes a brand-name/logo, a product per se, or a memory of product use, the resultant image/experience necessarily manifests in the present tense. Thus, the original, Gardner and Levy (1955), definition of product/brand image *DID* focus on consumer experience but, importantly, focused primarily on people's accumulated mental associations triggered by 'brand elements', rather than on those experiences manifesting concurrent with the consumption of the offering itself, in real-time. As quoted at the top of this page, Gardner and Levy (1955, p. 39) viewed the experiences that people had, whilst consuming a product/brand, as *contributing* to the 'image' of that product/brand, and not as *constituting* the 'image' in themselves.

I have already cited authors [Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), and Moore (2002) earlier in this review] who have sought to equate the notion of 'consumer experience' with the notion of the 'brand/brand image'. If adopted, this way of thinking effectively closes the gap between the notion of 'brand image' and the, so-called, 'experiential view' in marketing-thought. However, the reader will note that, whether a researcher/practitioner thinks in terms of 'brand image' or 'consumption experience', s/he nevertheless seeks to ascertain, and perhaps ultimately to control/manage, the impact of a particular offering on consumers. In due course I will argue that this attempt to isolate the experiential impact of particular offerings constitutes a huge philosophical and methodological problem.

2.2.3 Image/Impression Management

Barich and Kotler (1991, p. 94) refer to, "the customer's impression of an organization" and go on to describe how companies might, "attempt to determine just what that impression is." The reader will note that Barich and Kotler employ the term 'impression' in a manner synonymous with the way some authors use the term 'image'. Indeed, their article goes on to present a framework for 'image management'. I make this observation to show that this synonymous use of the terms 'image management' and 'impression management' [See Goffman (1959) for 'impression management'] sets a precedent that enables me to compare, and perhaps combine, marketing and sociological perspectives. Thus an individual, or organization, will perform the same types of behaviours whether one describes those behaviours as 'image management' or 'impression management'. In this way disciplinary boundaries begin to weaken.

Writing from a commercial perspective, Berry *et al* (2002, p. 1) suggest that:

> [T]he clues that make up a customer experience are everywhere, and they're easily discerned. Anything that can be perceived or sensed - or recognized by its absence - is an experience clue. Thus the product or service for sale gives off one set of clues, the physical setting offers more clues, and the employees - through their gestures, comments, dress and tone of voice - still more clues.

Approaching the same phenomenon from a sociological perspective, Goffman (1959, p. 241) writes about how human beings employ informational proxies, in the absence of full social information, within a given scenario. He refers to these substitutes as, "cues, tests, hints, expressive gestures, status symbols, [… and] predictive devices." If we adopt the commercial view, of human beings as products, then a human being, as with any other product, will trigger images/impressions, within perceiving others, and will engage (wittingly or unwittingly) in image/impression management. On this last point Kotler (1972, p. 49), and Rosenfeld *et al* (2002, p. 72) affirm that the process of image/impression management can proceed outside of the awareness of those practicing it. They attribute this to the over-learnt, and thus habituated, nature of some behaviour(s). For example, the socialisation process involves the naturalisation of saying 'please' and 'thank you', such that these terms constitute parts of the expected norms of polite society. Image/impression management need not therefore take the form of overtly wilful activity.

Phillips (1996, aphorism No. 7), a former Principle Child Psychotherapist, cogently describes image/impression management without even employing any specialist vocabulary:

> We work very hard to keep certain versions of ourselves in other people's minds, and, of course, the less appealing ones out of their minds. And yet everyone we meet invents us, whether we like it or not. Indeed nothing convinces us more of the existence of other people, of just how different they are from us, than what they can make of what we say to them.

If we view ourselves as products amongst other products, then the notion of product/brand image assumes an additional dimension. Whilst others will continue to develop 'images' of us [and us of them], significantly, we will also have an 'image' of self. According to this view, our capacity for self-awareness means that we will have a more-or-less-stable 'image' of self. Sirgy (1982, p. 287) states that, "[m]ost scholars seem to agree that the term 'self concept' denotes the 'totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object' […]". He goes on (p. 288) to define 'self image' as, "a concept equivalent to the actual self concept", namely, "how a person perceives herself" (p. 187). Schenk and Holman (1980, p. 3 of 9) also state, "Actual self image refers to an individual's perception of what he/she is like". This 'actual' self image contrasts with the term 'ideal self image', which, "refers to the way the individual would like to be." Schenk and Holman (1980, p. 3 of 9) go on to introduce the notion of 'situational self image' and define it as, "the meaning of self that the individual wishes others to have of him/herself." This latter term seems closely allied to what Sirgy (1982, p. 287) refers to as the "social self", namely, "how a person presents herself to others." In other words, how a person presents him/herself to others seems inseparable from the notion of how the presenting-self wishes others to regard him/her. Finally, here, the term 'global self-attitude', according to Sirgy (1982, p. 287), "has been treated as a conscious judgment regarding the relationship of one's actual self to the ideal or social self […]". The dichotomy that exists regarding the meaning of the term 'brand image' [either a set of associations

in memory, or a 'live' experience that a consumer has whist consuming a branded offering] applies equally to the term 'self image'. We can interpret the term 'self image' as relating to a stored-in-memory phenomenon, or, alternatively, as a 'live' moment-to-moment phenomenon. In the latter case the self image becomes one's momentary experience of oneself. However, this presents as an interesting problem when it comes to trying to separate one's self image from any other 'product/brand images' that we generate from moment-to-moment. I will return to this point shortly, when I will discuss the complexity of the intertwined content of commercially- and non-commercially-triggered experiences.

This leads me to the issue of the interrelationship between self and products, what Holbrook (1987, p. 129) termed, "the use of products as dramaturgical props that define and display the consumer's self-image." As far back as 1959 Levy (p. 119) wrote, implicitly, about the interaction between product image and self image:

> A symbol is appropriate (and the product will be used and enjoyed) when it joins with, meshes with, adds to, or reinforces the way the consumer thinks about himself. We are dealing here with a very plain fact of human nature. In the broadest sense, each person aims to enhance his sense of self, and behaves in ways that are consistent with his image of the person he is or wants to be.

More recently Carù and Cova (2003, p. 271) quote Firat and Dholakia (1998, p. 96):

> […] consumption is not a mere act of destroying, or using things. It is also not the end of the (central) economic cycle, but an act of production of experiences and selves or self images […].

And Wattanasuwan (2005, p. 180) writes, "In our everyday life, we employ consumption symbolism to construct and express our self-concepts as well as to identify our associations with others".

In the light of the foregoing discussion we can perhaps begin to view a person's relationship with 'other products' [accepting the self as a product amongst products] as an expansive form of co-branding. [See next section for a definition] The individual associates him/herself with other products/brands [broadly construed] and in doing so helps to define him/herself, as well as the products/brands with which s/he associates. Belk (1988) makes a strong case for viewing the products that we appropriate, and associate with, as integral aspects of our sense of self - what he thus calls 'the extended self' - extended through associating with products. Significantly, Belk (pp. 156-157) includes other people as possible markers of self. Perhaps not surprisingly, Belk also includes a person's own body, and its various parts, as central components of a person's sense of self. As Peters (1997, p. 4 of 7) put it, "When you're promoting brand You, everything you do - and everything you choose not to do - communicates the value and character of the brand." Thus, who we associate with, and how we look after, manage and present our own body, all function as indicative signs which others may use as clues when constructing an image/impression of us.

2.2.4 Co-Branding

Keller (1998, p. 283) writes:

> *Co-branding* - also called brand bundling or brand alliances - occurs when two or more existing brands are combined into a joint product and/or marketed together in some fashion.

Rao and Ruekert (1994, p. 87) make the point that:

> […] current [1994] academic research and the popular business press focus on the value of the individual brand, which has a distinct identity independent of other brands. In reality, however, brands often coexist with other brands in the same product.

Solomon and Assael (1987) pre-empted Rao and Ruekert's (1994) focus on brand alliances, albeit from the perspective of the consumer. Solomon and Assael focused on, what they called, "*product constellations*". They define these as (p. 191):

> […] clusters of complementary products, specific brands, and/or consumption activities used by consumers to define, communicate, and enact social roles.

They go on to write:

> Although it is clear that many products possess symbolic meaning for consumers, it is also apparent that in many cases no single product in isolation defines a social situation. Instead, consumers look to the total collection of cues in the environment to decode the meanings present there and to structure their behavior accordingly […].

And later they write (p. 198), "The consumer must amass a collection of symbolic 'props' which permits him or her to credibly play these [social] roles." Thus we can see how Solomon and Assael invoke the notion of theatrical 'props' in their discussion of the staging of social selves. Gibbs (2002, p. 5), writing about the theatrical concept of 'mise-en-scène' states:

> Literally translated it means 'to put on stage', but figurative uses of the term have a long history. For the student of film, a useful definition might be: 'the contents of the frame and the way they are organised'. Both halves of this formulation are significant - the contents and their organisation.

> What are the contents of the frame? They include lighting, costume, décor, properties, and the actors themselves. The organisation of the contents of the frame encompasses the relationship of the actors to one other [sic] and to the décor, but also their relationship to the camera, and thus the audience's view.

Later, having examined the various aspects of mise-en-scène, Gibbs writes (p. 26):

> It is important to be able to describe the individual elements of mise-en-scène, and it is important to consider each element's potential for expression. But it is worth remembering from the outset that these elements are most productively thought of in terms of their *interaction* rather than individually - in practice, it is the interplay of elements that is significant.

Thus we may observe, from reading Gibbs (2002), that cinema/theatre designers/directors employ the same tactics and considerations as 'experience engineers' (Carbone and Haeckel 1994) in the world of marketing. Both groups must decide on the contents, and organisation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional 'environments'. They essentially must think in terms of how the various components of a scenario, including the actors and their presentation, work in concert to propose a certain experience for the 'audience'. Interestingly, Tynan and Mckechnie (2009, p. 505), in their review of the 'experience marketing' literature, trace the development of experience marketing back through Carbone and Haeckel (1994), to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982). Holbrook, in turn, traces a line back to the predecessors who helped to develop the experiential turn in marketing-thought. [See section 2.5.1 of this review]

The use of celebrities in relation to the marketing of an offering constitutes a form of co-branding which applies in the dramatic arts

as well as in relation to product and 'cause' endorsement. It involves a famous person lending (usually at a price) his/her accumulated (usually favourable) associations [held in 'the public mind'] to a product or cause. As McCracken (1989, p. 312) puts it:

> The effectiveness of the endorser depends, in part, upon the meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. The number and variety of the meanings contained in celebrities are very large.

I should note that, strictly speaking, the meanings reside within the perceiving consumer, and not within celebrities. The celebrity functions as the trigger that 'awakens' the associations already in a consumer's memory. McCracken goes on to write (p. 313):

> [A]n endorsement succeeds when an association is fashioned between the cultural meanings of the celebrity world, on the one hand, and the endorsed product, on the other.

We have seen that the marketing concept of clue-management, when practiced in the cinema/theatre, goes by the name of 'mise-en-scène'. When applied in social life, Goffman (1959) called the process 'impression management'. And when applied in commercial contexts Carbone and Haeckel (1994) called the process 'experience engineering'. Likewise we might call the individual elements within a given context 'properties' in the cinema/theatre, 'objects' in a social context, and 'products' or 'clues' in a commercial context. I highlight this interdisciplinary dimension because I wish to address human behaviour and experience in a manner that remains open to phenomena which transcend the less-than-watertight-boundaries which demarcate the contents and limits of a particular subject discipline.

When 'elements' are brought together - or come together unbidden - in the cinema, theatre, social life, or in overtly-commercial contexts such as supermarkets or airports, an associational mingling begins to occur within the perceiving individual. This associational activity gets triggered by different combinations of the various 'ingredients' [both commercial and non-commercial] comprising the overall situational 'offering'. This complicates the notion of brand image immeasurably. The associations triggered, within an individual, by one of the ingredients, comprising a scenario, may interact unpredictably with the associations triggered by any other 'ingredient(s). The painter Francis Bacon spoke of this complex process (Archimbaud 1999, p. 148):

> I think that every image, everything we see, changes our ways of seeing everything else. My perception is completely altered. Certain images, perhaps even everything that I see, might imperceptibly modify all the rest. There's a sort of influence of image upon image; it's a great mystery, but I'm sure that that's what happens.

In discussing how people seek to engender self-related meanings McCracken (1989, p. 317) wrote:

> We know that they must select and combine these meanings [derived through interaction with 'objects'] in a process of experimentation […] But this process is still very much terra incognito from a scholarly point of view. Of all the topics in the culture and consumer behavior portfolio, this one is the most neglected.

According to Berry *et al* (2002, p. 2), "The company's goal is to get to the point where it is providing the right set of clues to its customers." If a company (or individual) wants to manage the image/impression that others form of it (him/her), then it (s/he) may start by seeking to evaluate how consumers currently regard its (his/her) offering.

2.2.5 Measuring 'Image'

Reynolds and Gutman (1984, p. 27) make the following point:

> […] the way image is defined determines the manner in which research to understand image is designed, executed, and, ultimately, translated to the creative process.

If researchers employ a definition of product/brand image that characterises 'image' as the stored meanings in consumers' memories, then their methods of seeking to measure 'image' will probably differ from those used by researchers who embrace a view of 'image' that characterises it as the consumers' 'live', moment-to-moment, experiences whilst consuming an offering. The former researchers may ask consumers what comes to mind when they get presented with a 'brand element', such as a name or logo, as in the following articles: Boivin (1986, p. 14), Hirschman (1981, p. 3 of 9), and McDonald (1973, p. 165). Researchers adopting 'the-brand-image-is-the-experience-whilst-consuming' definition may instead enquire about a people's perceptions during and/or after particular episodes. For example, Breazeale (2000) discusses the use of 'electronic group measurement' (also called 'audience response systems'). These systems employ interfaces that include: pressing keyboard buttons, moving sliders, turning dials, or some combination of these (p. 3 of 6). Researchers can use these systems to probe audience-response to continuous stimuli such as: radio broadcasts, TV programmes/advertisements, movies, lectures, presentations, or even a lawyer presenting a case to a jury. Thus researchers get second-by-second information regarding individuals' responses, aggregated (and even segmented if required) to provide whole-group/sub-group 'interest curves'. According to Breazeale, researchers have employed these 'group measurement systems' extensively during political campaigns in the USA, in order to

identify popular/unpopular issues, and voter preferences regarding candidates. Ramanathan and McGill (2007) employ this technology, amongst other methods, when seeking to measure if and how the presence of another person can impact on someone's TV/movie-viewing experience. Similarly, Andrade and Cohen (2007) used moment-to-moment-response-measuring-technology in their research designed to explore why people would wish to watch horror movies, given that this type of product seemingly contradicts the concept of hedonic (feel-good) consumption behaviour.

Rothwell *et al* (2006) sought to obtain data of a more 'objective' kind than that available through 'audience response systems'. They employed an experimental set-up that allowed them to record people's physiological responses [biometrics] to emotional stimuli during movie-viewing. This involved connecting individuals to instruments which measured, for example: heart rate, galvanic skin response [a change in the electrical resistance of the skin caused by emotional stress], body temperature and movement (p. 103). However, the researchers conceded that, as yet, they cannot differentiate, in their data, between 'positive' and 'negative' emotions. As with the 'audience response measurement', mentioned earlier, these latter measures provide quantitative data that provide only very coarse indicators of affect.

Research undertaken to ascertain a person's response after, rather than during, exposure to an offering, usually entails the use of questionnaires, interviews, and/or introspective techniques. Petrova and Cialdini (2005), for example, employed questionnaires in order to ascertain subject's responses to hypothetical products. Likewise, Richins (1997) used questionnaires to gauge people's responses to hypothetical scenarios. Joy and Sherry (2003) interviewed art-museum visitors during and after the visitors'

exposure to exhibitions, whilst Bonsu and Belk's (2003) research involved in-depth interviewing, with a focus on people's past experiences relating to death rituals and funerals. Examples of the use of introspective approaches include Holbrook (1986) who used researcher introspection to focus on his own prior consumption of music, and Gould (1991) employed introspection to shed light on how he used various products to alter both the quality and levels of his own self-perceived organismic energy.

2.2.6 Concluding Section 2.2

I referred earlier to, what strikes me as, a huge philosophical and methodological problem with regard to the notion of product/brand image. We may think of the entirety of a particular existential context or situation as a 'field'. Yontef (1993, p. 3 of 39) defines a 'field' as:

> […] a whole in which the parts are in immediate relationship and responsive to each other and no part is uninfluenced by what goes on elsewhere in the field. The field replaces the notion of discrete, isolated particles. The person in his or her life space constitutes a field.

We can view this field as the dynamic culmination of a complex coming-and-bringing-together of constituent elements. Thus the field consists of a constantly-mobile, dynamic 'composition'. Each human being co-constitutes and, simultaneously, 'lives off/in' this 'configuration-in-flux'. I propose that the ongoing experience(s) of each individual derive from his/her particular mode of 'give and take' within a particular field. Bauman (2007, p. 57) characterised human beings as "consumer commodities"; in other words, a person may simultaneously consume [others, places, things, organisations, ideas…] whilst, him/herself, existing as a consumable phenomenon for self and others. Thus, the 'image' or 'experience' that constitutes

an individual's consciousness, at a given point in space-time, will depend upon what s/he notices, and does, within a given 'field'. This noticing and doing may take the form of an internal (interoceptive) focus, and/or an outward-looking (exteroceptive) orientation. A person's experience will derive from the particular subset of organismic and environmental stimuli to which s/he simultaneously attends to and contributes to. The idea that we can identify a direct, exclusive, causal link between a particular stimulus and a particular state-of-being, within a perceiving individual, seems problematic to say the least. Addis and Holbrook (2001, pp. 56, and 62) exemplify the particulars of this problem in two successive quotations:

> [1] Every consumption event involves an interaction between a subject and an object […], where the subject of interest is a consumer or customer and the object of interest is some good, service, event, person, place, or other kind of thing.
>
> [2] When applied more generally, this holistic perspective suggests that product usage is not separate and isolated from the rest of the consumer's world; rather it is embedded in that world - that is, the product is closely related to a person's feelings, other products, relationships of the person, the surrounding society, the consumer's whole lifeworld.

Here we see two somewhat incompatible objectives. On the one hand the consumer researchers, understandably, want to ascertain an individual's response to a particular consumption object. On the other hand they acknowledge that the experience that an individual has, whilst consuming the 'target' stimulus, may derive from other concurrently-perceived stimuli within the perceiving-and-acting individual and/or amongst/around the targeted offering.

As stated earlier, how one defines the terms 'product' and 'product/brand image' will inform how one goes about one's

business as a researcher thereof. As this review progresses I will show, increasingly, that the conceptual infrastructure already exists within marketing-thought which enables me to view the entirety of each existential scenario as a complex 'offering', co-constituted by those individuals who concurrently reside therein. I suggest that the concept of the individual product/brand image does not help when it comes to seeking to understand complex human experiences and actions in everyday scenarios. Even notions of 'co-branding' and 'product constellations' can only take us so far in accounting for complex person-environment interactions. It seems inescapable, to me, that I must treat human being as comprising of complex interactions between selves and constellations of contextual elements. The notion of the individual product/brand image must give way to a broader conception that encompasses the totality of an individual's moment-to-moment, contextualised behaviour and experience.

2.3 Broadening

2.3.1 Marketing Definitions

> The importance of a definition, including for marketing, cannot be overstated. Standing alone, a definition defines the scope and content of that which is defined, fixing its boundaries and describing its subject matter.
>
> - Gundlach (2007, p. 24)

> To restrict the subject matter of marketing to 'economic' or 'commercial' exchanges rather than the universal phenomenon of exchange would be like constraining physics to explore the material structure of metals rather than the entire world of physical reality.
>
> - Bagozzi (1977, p. 322)

Marketing emerged at the beginning of the 20th century as a specifically commercial/economic discipline concerned with ensuring that products and their end-users/consumers met, and that an appropriate exchange of goods-for-money occurred (Bartels 1974, p. 73; Levy 2002, p. 299). However, marketing has subsequently undergone significant definitional changes. The inaugural 1937 American Marketing Association (AMA) definition, for example, had an unequivocal business orientation, "those business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from production to consumption" (Gundlach 2007, p. 243). We can contrast this with the 2008 AMA definition (AMA 2008, p. 1):

> *Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.*

This latest definition, as I read it, clearly shows signs of an inclusiveness which allows for the non-business instances and applications of marketing. The term 'offering' seems potentially more inclusive of non-commercial phenomena, than the terms 'product' or 'service'.

The term 'exchange' entered the AMA definition of marketing in 1985 - the first substantive change since the inaugural definition of 1935 - (Gundlach 2007, p. 243):

> the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.

The term 'exchange' got dropped from the 2004 definition (Gundlach 2007, p. 243):

> Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

The reader will note that this definition represents marketing as a strictly 'organizational' phenomenon. It does not allow for the application of marketing by individuals. Sheth and Uslay (2007, p. 302) welcome the 2004 AMA definition, in particular the move away from, what they call, "[…] the sacred cow of exchange." Sheth and Uslay celebrate the focus on 'value creation' as the prime underlying purpose of marketing. In a nutshell they write, "Value creation depends and thrives on the quality and variety of personal experiences it enables" (p. 304). Interestingly, the AMA 2008 definition of marketing re-introduced the notion of 'exchange' whilst also retaining a reference to 'value creation' (AMA 2008, p. 1 of 3):

> *Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.*

Bartels (1974, p. 75) provides a description of the background and logic underpinning a broadened view of marketing:

> The need for distribution or dissemination of products has characterized all societies, in all stages of development. To provide for the supply of their consumption needs, societies have developed processes, institutional patterns, agencies, standards, priorities, and values requisite for achieving their particular objectives. Although the distributive systems have been known by a variety of names, they have served the same purpose: the distribution of products, whatever their kind and however they might have been produced. They also shared in common the fact that they dealt with the economic goods of the society. The performance of this function in this century [20th] has been identified as marketing. […] [B]asic

> human intelligence attains goals in interaction through communication, persuasion, adaptation, compromise, accommodation, and the like, whether expressed in the home, school, church, or government. In marketing, those processes have been termed market research, selling, market segmentation, adaptivity, consumer-orientation, promotional strategy, and the like; and these activities have constituted 'marketing.' Had the research and conceptualization occurred first elsewhere than in the economy, the terms from the educational, religious, or political areas might by now have been incorporated in marketing terminology, rather than vice versa. What in marketing is 'selling' in the school is 'teaching,' in the church 'proselyting,' in politics 'propagandizing,' in the military 'indoctrinating.' The marketer who adapts his product to the market is doing what the teacher does in organizing his class presentation, the preacher in sermonizing for the needs of his congregation, or the housewife in catering to the food tastes of her family.
>
> The question, then, is whether marketing is identified by the *field* of economics in which the marketing techniques have been developed and generally applied, or by the so-called marketing *techniques,* wherever they may be applied.

I have quoted Bartels at some length because what he writes underpins the development of my own argument. The fact that human beings often differently-label the same types of activities/phenomena, when those activities/phenomena occur in different contexts and domains, lies at the heart of Bartels' comments. This points me to the idea that particular 'discourses' develop in relation to different disciplines. Hall (1997, p. 44), [quoting from his own prior work (Hall 1992, p. 291)] explains:

> By 'discourse', [Michel] Foucault meant 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment. … Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. … But … since all social practices entail *meaning,* and meanings shape and influence what we do - our conduct - all practices have a discursive aspect' […].

Thus, the particular vocabularies that develop, in different subject areas, constitute one of the ways of 'enclaving' that subject area. The vocabulary used within a discipline identifies and differentiates that discipline relative to others. In other words, [employing here the discourse of marketing] the vocabulary helps to 'brand' the discipline. As Levy (1996, p. 170) put it:

> Branding cannot basically be distinguished from identifying or naming anything that we believe is available for sale or exchange - whether ideas, objects, or persons.

Over 40 years ago Kotler and Levy (1969b, p. 57) addressed the issue of the scope of the marketing concept:

> Marketing is a universal process carried on by individuals, groups, and organizations. Basically, it describes those efforts to win the support of others through offering value. This process is termed marketing for two reasons: First, a better term for this generic and endemic process has not been found. Second, we think that a single theory can ultimately be forged to describe this process no matter where it occurs and no matter what it is called.

Indeed, later that year Levy and Kotler (1969) wrote an article in which they proposed an alternative (or complementary) term to describe marketing phenomena (p. 70):

> Perhaps the overall concept encompassing the determination of audience needs and the generating of audience interest and supportive response to one's aims might use the term '**furthering**' instead of marketing. Marketing might then remain reserved to those interactions and forms of furthering that have a more specific money fulcrum. [Emphasis in original]

History has shown that others have not appropriated the term 'furthering' en masse. Suffice it to say, however, that Levy and Kotler recognised a problem, of public resistance, regarding the

application of commercially-derived terminology [‘marketing’] to non-commercial phenomena. Surprisingly, even a leading marketing textbook (Jobber 2010, p. 3) - which one might expect to take a pro-marketing stance - opens with the following sentence:

> In general marketing has a bad press. Phrases like ‘marketing gimmicks’, ‘marketing ploys’ and ‘marketing tricks’ abound. The result is that marketing is condemned by association.

Initially, Kotler and Levy (1969a, p. 11) used the term ‘marketing-like’ when referring to non-commercial applications of marketing. However, ten years later they wrote (Levy and Kotler 1979, p. 235):

> […] it became necessary to give up that usage when it became apparent that there was no realistic difference between marketing activities and marketing-like activities. None of the attempts to distinguish business marketing and marketing in any other setting in a fundamental way hold water.

Thus Levy and Kotler abandoned their own notion of ‘furthering’ in favour of a broadened application of the term ‘marketing’.

Some academics have adopted a defensive, proprietorial, stance in relation to the impulse of others to broaden the concept of marketing. Luck (1969, pp. 53-54), for example, wrote:

> Attenuate marketing’s definition to make it almost universal, and it will wholly lose its identity. […] Marketing is concerned with markets, of course, and markets must be characterized by buying and selling.

In their retort to Luck, Kotler and Levy (1969b, p. 57) wrote:

> Professor Luck is afraid that this [broadened] definition claims too much for marketing and is likely to be interpreted as an encroachment upon other disciplines. We take the view that jurisdictional disputes are healthy for the progress of science, and the validity of any new viewpoint will ultimately be tested in the marketplace.

Laczniak and Michie (1979, p. 226) suggest that:

> […] if the field of marketing succeeds in convincing the public that the domain of marketing rightly involves all transactions, the discipline of marketing is asking to play the role of a symbolic Atlas with the weight of the world upon its theoretical shoulders.

Levy and Kotler (1979, p. 236) reply to this by suggesting that, "The broadened concept was merely calling attention to the fact that academic domains are conveniences and blinkered specializations […]" And, further to this, Levy (2002, p. 2 of 5) quotes Popper (1963, p. 67):

> All this classification and distinction [the territorial issue] is a comparatively unimportant and superficial affair. We are not students of some subject matter but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline.

And Bagozzi (1975, p. 39) writes:

> It is not so much the fact that the subject matter of marketing overlaps with that of other disciplines as it is that the problems of marketing are universal.

Which marketing problems can we describe as universal? If we accept a broadening of the concept of marketing, then Levy's following definition (Consumption, Markets and Culture [C.M.C.] 2003, p. 113) identifies the problems that we all face:

> I see marketing as a term for the universal process of exchange, including all striving to provide and to receive, and all the competition, frustration, and gratification that are the accompaniment of that striving. The conventional content of the consumption of goods and services and commercial marketing are then particular manifestations of this universal process of marketing.

Levy thus identifies the process of exchange as central to his broad conception of marketing. He does not, however, specify the 'currency' of exchange. As I will discuss later in this section, this currency may take the form of, for example: attention, effort/energy, know-how, and time, as well as money, goods, and services. The 'striving', to which Levy refers, relates to our efforts to bring something 'to market'. On a personal level, perhaps we want others to value our personal qualities, our appearance, and/or our creative output. As Levy notes, we can feel frustrated when our 'product' (our self and those things that we do and/or produce) fails to find 'a market'. We may also, at times, feel gratified on account of believing that others value us, and what we offer. Levy refers to the competition inherent in this process; other, perhaps more tempting, 'products' may exist, than the one that we have to offer. How do we make our self and our output [more generally, our 'offer'] more desirable to our target market in a competitive context? Here we have the universal 'problem' of marketing. Thus people may employ facets of the marketing arsenal in pursuance of their objectives. Seen from this perspective, human being, itself, constitutes an elemental form of marketing. We see more-popular, more desirable, people than ourselves, as well as less-popular, less-desirable, people than ourselves. They produce more-popular/celebrated 'produce' [or less so] than us - whether in the form of attractiveness, music, writing, and so on. To what degree do we modify our self and our output in order to appeal to the market? Does our 'packaging' correspond with our 'contents'?

Which product category do we fit into? These (and other) 'marketing' issues apply, metaphorically, to all forms of human interaction. We may thus view human being as a complex actional and perceptual system, with a 'persuasive' dimension. For me, the paramount questions become: How does our subjective experience relate to the palpable 'clues' that we give out and give off? What do others make of what we give out and give off? We can not answer these questions without the feedback of other people. We can not experience our self from the outside (in the way that other people can experience us), our embodied state precludes this. Most of us do not operate from an out-of-our-own-body perspective.

Shepherd (2005, p. 592) notes:

> […] attempts to adopt both the marketing principle and marketing techniques in non-conventional settings [such as, in: religion, politics, education, health, and places] is still the subject of considerable resistance and debate.

So we have those who view marketing as a specifically commercial phenomenon, and others who espouse the universality of the marketing concept. Yet even those who promote a broad view acknowledge resistance from those who, for one reason or another, do not feel comfortable applying commercially-derived discourse to non-commercial areas of life.

2.3.2 Exchange

Bagozzi (1975) argues that the straightforward 'cash-for-goods/services' or 'goods/services-for-other-goods/services' forms of exchange constitute only one part of a tripartite typology of possible exchanges. He enumerates these as: 'restricted', 'generalized', and 'complex' exchanges, respectively. The term 'restricted exchange' pertains to the, aforesaid, two-party give-and-

take (reciprocal) exchange. A 'generalized exchange' takes the form of a system, comprising of at least three parties, in which the participants benefit each other only indirectly. For example, I go to Speaker's Corner in London and I 'speak my mind' in front of a, seemingly impassive, audience. Something that I say 'strikes a chord' with one of the listeners and she embarks on a life-changing process. I subsequently receive a letter from the girl's parents (who have tracked me down somehow). They thank me for the part that I played in the reformation of their, formerly, drug-addicted daughter. Thus my 'payoff' comes from people once-removed from the original recipient of my catalytic communication act. 'Complex exchange' again involves a minimum of three parties, but in this case each party engages in at least one direct exchange. Over and above this, interrelationships also occur between the parties. If I return to my 'Speaker's Corner' example, it becomes a complex exchange when the drug-addicted girl approaches me after my presentation, says that what I said inspired her, and thanks me. She then goes home, a changed woman, and family relationships improve exponentially. I subsequently also get thanked by the girl's parents.

Bagozzi (1975, p. 35) defines the 'media of exchange' as:

> […] the vehicles with which people communicate to, and influence, others in the satisfaction of their needs. These vehicles include money, persuasion, punishment, power (authority), inducement, and activation of normative or ethical commitments. Products and services are also media of exchange.

In the examples, cited above, my self-presentation, posture, and my use of language constitute the media of exchange as I stand on my plinth at Speaker's Corner. I 'receive' in the form of genuine thanks and appreciation via words and handshakes/hugs/smiles.

Bagozzi (1975, pp. 36-37) goes on to discuss the nature of what people get from the exchange process, in terms of experiences, feelings, and meanings. He again employs a tripartite model: 'utilitarian exchange', 'symbolic exchange', and 'mixed exchange'. 'Utilitarian exchanges' (also called economic exchanges) involve the straight exchange of money for goods/services or goods/services for other goods/services. Here the focus lies on the direct, tangible benefits that the recipients gain from the items exchanged. The hypothetical 'Speaker's Corner' exchange does not fall into this category, since it involves no direct economic, or material, quid pro quo. If the girl had thrown some coins into my up-turned cap, on the floor in front of me, we could describe this as a 'service-for-cash', utilitarian exchange. The term 'symbolic exchange', "refers to the mutual transfer of psychological, social, or other intangible entities between two or more parties." (Bagozzi 1975, p.36) The 'Speaker's Corner' example very much fits into this category of exchange. I provided 'inspiration' through the vehicles of speech and gesture; in return I received 'appreciation' via the vehicles of words and gestures. 'Mixed exchanges', as the name implies, "involve both utilitarian and symbolic aspects, and it is often difficult to separate the two." (Bagozzi 1975, p. 36) Thus, as I said, if the girl had given me money for my efforts, along with thanks and a hug, then she and I would have had a 'mixed exchange'.

Bagozzi (1975, p. 37) concludes his discussion of modes of exchange by stating the following:

> The processes involved in the creation and resolution of exchange relationships constitute the subject matter of marketing, and these processes depend on, and cannot be separated from, the fundamental character of human and organizational needs.

In other words, Bagozzi casts exchange relationships, and thus marketing, as an essential, inescapable component of human being.

2.3.3 Further Extensions of the Marketing Concept

Peter and Olson (1983, p. 120) quote Kuhn (1970, p. 198):

> The superiority of one theory to another is something that cannot be proved in debate. Instead, I have insisted, each party must try, *by persuasion,* to convert the other […] [Emphasis added by Peter and Olson].

Thus Peter and Olson suggest that scholars must market their 'theory products'. In suggesting this notion, Peter and Olson, themselves, engage in 'marketing'. Specifically, their article promotes a novel application of the marketing concept. They apply the, so-called, 4P's of marketing [product, promotion, place, and price (Jobber 2010, pp. 17-23)] to the marketing of theories. Interestingly, when it comes to the 'price' of a new idea, Peter and Olson (p. 115) include: 'time expenditure' [time spent reading/learning the new idea], psychological costs [resulting from the disruption to one's 'mental' status quo], and the physical energy/effort expended during the research process. These latter 'costs' augment any literal costs involved in buying books and attending conferences etc.

Gilbert (1977), writing from outside of the marketing discipline, suggests that academic referencing constitutes a form of persuasion (p. 116):

> In order to justify an argument to an audience of potentially interested readers, it is most effective to cite a selection of those papers which the intended audience believe present well founded, valid results. The participants in a mature field will share a belief that some published work is important and correct, some other work is trivial, perhaps some is

> erroneous, and much is irrelevant to their current interests. Hence, authors preparing papers will tend to cite the 'important and correct' papers, may cite 'erroneous' papers in order to challenge them and will avoid citing the 'trivial', and 'irrelevant' ones. Indeed, respected papers may be cited in order to shine in their reflected glory even if they do not seem closely related to the substantive content of the report.

One can thus see academic referencing as allied to the notion of 'the marketing of ideas' written about by Peter and Olson (1983).

Hirschman (1983, p. 49) suggested that artists of certain types become the first audience/consumers of their own work. Hirschman positions this idea as a broadening of the notion of 'exchange' (p. 49):

> The term 'audience' or 'consumer' is extended beyond the public at large and even beyond the notion of external parties (e.g., peers, critics) to the realization that some marketing exchanges are initiated within one's self. In self-orientated marketing the creator may serve as the initial consumer of that which he/she creates.

This notion supports the idea that when two people interact, '$actor_1$' will consume his/her own moment-to-moment self-awareness as part of 'the mix' when, ostensibly, simply consuming '$actor_2$'s' output. In other words, communicating-individuals consume their own overt verbal contributions [as well as their covert goings-on i.e., the things they experience but do not express] *whilst* attending to each other's output. Julian Schnabel (artist/filmmaker) alluded to this phenomenon when interviewed in Rappolt (2008, p. 74):

> I've always thought about simultaneity of time, I'm talking about one thing, but you're not just hearing what I'm saying to you, you're thinking about whatever happened to you - I don't know what problem you have - but I know you're not just thinking about what I'm saying[.]

Indeed the 'listener' may listen more carefully, and with more enjoyment, to his/her own 'inner dialogue', than to the speaker's overt utterances during a social exchange. This chimes with something Bagozzi (1978, p. 554) wrote:

> […] the theory [of exchange] needs to be expanded to incorporate ongoing exchanges as they ebb and flow. Exchange behaviors exhibit a dynamism that risks being obscured by static analyses.

By focusing on dynamic human being as it occurs, in real-time, rather than focusing solely on one's own, or others', prior experiences, I have an opportunity to get as near as humanly possible to the mechanics of moment-to-moment acting/behaving and experiencing.

I will end this section with two anomalous marketing concepts which may have a bearing on my project. Firstly, Kotler and Levy's (1971) notion of 'demarketing', essentially the idea that in certain circumstances, it may benefit an individual, or organisation, to reduce the demand for his/her/its/an offering. It will suffice to say here that we can employ marketing techniques to discourage consumption as well as encourage it. Healthy-living campaigns, for example, may seek to encourage people to reduce their alcohol intake, whilst encouraging the same people to eat more fruit and vegetables. In terms of interpersonal relations, we do not want everyone to become our close friends, thus we can keep certain people 'at a distance' whilst encouraging others to 'come a little closer'. Secondly, Kotler and Levy (1973) suggested that buyers sometimes market themselves to sellers. If, for example, a person wants to secure a bank loan, s/he will do well to 'make an effort' in terms of preparation and personal presentation. Why should the bank manager give money to one person rather than another?

Given parity in all other departments, a well presented individual, with manners and charm, will likely prevail over a 'competitor' lacking in these social graces. Similarly, we will probably engender a better rapport in a food outlet if we treat the staff with courtesy. In short, the buyer can seek to improve his/her standing in relation to a 'seller' through marketing him/herself as a desirable person to sell to or serve. This phenomenon may relate especially in cases of the buying and selling of pets or houses - the adage about not giving 'pearls to swine' comes to mind here.

2.3.4 Concluding Section 2.3

The exchange paradigm encourages a focus on the dynamics occurring between specific participating agents. The value creation paradigm focuses on the co-creation of value, [See section 2.5.4 of this review] where the term 'value' functions synonymously with the notion of 'valued experiences'. In both paradigms we see an implicit focus on controlling the offering [its physicality, context, accessibility, associational dimensions, and 'price'] in order to facilitate 'value creation'. I will argue that, viewed from a field-theoretical-perspective, anything and everything that comprises a particular 'field' potentially enters the value creation [experience creation] process. The 'organism/environment field' (Perls *et al* 1951, p. 228), thus constitutes the essential, indissoluble context of exchange processes:

> There is no single function of any animal that completes itself without objects and environment, whether one thinks of vegetative functions like nourishment and sexuality, or perceptual functions, or motor functions, or feelings, or reasoning.

Any value/experience inescapably arises from the exchange/interaction between an individual and his/her micro-

environment. The notion of the "consumer commodity" [we consume, and also get 'consumed' by self and others (Bauman 2007, p. 57)] implies a 'taking in' and a 'giving to', but the field-theoretical-perspective implies that such an exchange does not simply occur between 'actor$_1$' and 'actor$_2$'. The exchange goes on between 'actor$_1$' in relation to his/her total environment, and 'actor$_2$' in relation to his/her total environment. 'Actor$_2$' forms a part of 'actor$_1$'s' environment; and 'actor$_1$' forms a part of 'actor$_2$'s' environment. The exchange thus always occurs between contextualised individuals embedded in their respective organism/environment fields. The individuals may, or may not, share the same geographical setting; during an email exchange, for example, the individuals may exist in discrete, distant locals.

An artist, marketer, or homemaker - anyone for that matter - may attempt to control, for example, every aspect of a work, an offering, or a domestic environment. Yet the consuming and producing individual who enters such a 'managed field' fundamentally changes the structure of the field as s/he becomes a constituent part of it. Thus the consumer-producer always experiences and acts as a field-co-constituting agent. The field-co-constituting individual thus always experiences and acts in relation to other aspects of the wider 'field'. In this way, an individual does not solely consume a particular product/service to the exclusion of all else; rather, s/he attends to whichever aspect(s) of his/her organism/environment field become(s) fore-grounded on a second-by-second basis.

The 'figure/ground' concept (Thompson *et al* 1989, p. 136) points to the fact that:

> A particular setting can afford different experiences as certain aspects of the context stand out while others recede and

> become background […]. Consider a mother and child shopping in a store. Initially, the mother is focally aware of the store's offerings and the child is in the background of her experiential field. Let the child begin crying and, suddenly, the store recedes into the background as the child becomes the focal aspect of the mother's life-world.

And, on the same theme, Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls (1973, p. 2) writes:

> A man coming into a room full of people, for example, does not perceive merely blobs of color and movement, faces and bodies. He perceives the room and the people in it as a unit, in which one element, selected from the many present, stands out, while the others recede into the background. The choice of which element will stand out is made as a result of many factors, all of which can be lumped together under the general term *interest.* As long as there is interest, the whole scene will appear to be organized in a meaningful way. It is only when interest is completely lacking that perception is atomized, and the room is seen as a jumble of unrelated objects.

And finally, psychologist/philosopher William James (1890, p. 402) writes:

> Millions of items in the outward order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no *interest* for me. *My experience is what I agree to attend to.* Only those items which I *notice* shape my mind - without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos.

Thus, a person within a given setting (such as a cinema or restaurant) may not, simply, consume the ostensible object of consumption i.e., the movie or the meal. Whilst ostensibly 'taking in' one thing, s/he may alternatingly or concurrently 'take in' something else. Thus, whatever a person 'takes in', registers, or notices, via his/her senses, within and/or outside of him/herself, become(s) his/her of-the-moment object(s) of consumption.

2.4 Defining 'Consumption' and 'Consuming'

2.4.1 So what do we Mean by 'Consumption'?

As with the terms 'product', 'image', and 'marketing', discussed earlier in this review, much hinges on how people understand the term 'consumption'. Mackay (1997, p. 2) asks a key question, "So what exactly do we mean by consumption?" Wilk (2004, p. 11) answers, saying that most social scientists employ a, "vague, undefined and intangible" notion of consumption. O'Connor (2002, p. 151) goes some way towards explaining this 'fuzziness'. He describes words such as: 'fear', 'relationship', and 'consumption' as nominalizations:

> A nominalization is the result of a verb being turned into an abstract noun. […] When a noun cannot be directly seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted, it is a nominalization.

In order to begin to concretise a nominalization, O'Connor (p. 151) suggests that we "turn the noun back into the verb and express the thought as a process." Cheal (2008) calls this process "denominalising" - 'fear' becomes 'feeling afraid', 'relationship' becomes the process of 'relating', and the term 'consumption' becomes a specific act of 'consuming'. Nominalizations, including 'consumption', leave-out relevant information [Who does what to whom?], hence their vagueness. O'Connor (2002, p. 177) says, "They [nominalizations] lack any specific information, so [a person] makes sense of them in any way that suits them best." In Figure 2.1 we can see some of the information necessary for a person to construct a more specific understanding of what the term 'consumption' implies. In this case I have used the hypothetical example of consuming a movie. In short, when people (or other organisms) engage in consumption, they 'consume' something or

other. This begs a further important question, posed by Holt (1995, p. 1), "What do people do when they consume?"

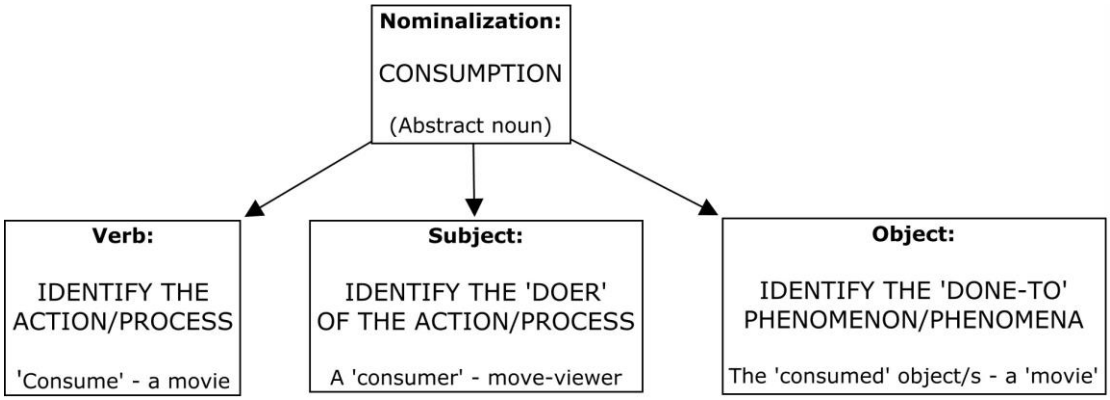


Figure 2.1 Nominalization - Adapted from O'Connor (2002, p. 152)

Aldridge (2003, p. 2) traces the word 'consume' back to the fourteenth century; it originally meant, "to use up, destroy, devour, waste, squander, exhaust." Wilk (2004, p. 16) writes:

> Burning is historically the first English usage of the verb consume, attributed to the Wyclif Bible in 1382, in a biblical passage where a sacrifice 'with fier shal be consumyd?' (Lev. 6: 23).

Wilk suggests (p. 16) that "[e]ating and consuming are also connected to each other through their common metaphorical relationship to fire, and the act of burning." [The burning-up of calories] Bauman (2007, p. 25) refers to the, "archetypical form of [consumption,] the metabolic cycle of ingesting, digesting and excreting". And Levy (1996, p. 164) refers to, "the primitive roots of consuming" and, like Bauman (2007), he links the broad concept of consuming to the processes of eating:

> The first definition of the word "consume" is usually to eat, to ingest, followed by other meanings also derived from the Latin origins of the word - to take completely, to use up, to destroy,

> and to waste. As consuming organisms, we take food, use it, and make waste.

Cskszentmihalyi (2000, p. 271) cites economist/philosopher Adam Smith [1723-1790] as a person who promoted the notion, "that production is justified by consumption; that the needs of the consumer dictate what the economy should provide." This accords with Williams' (1988, p. 78) assertion that the 'consumer', as distinct from the 'producer', of goods and services, began to emerge as a linguistic term from the middle of the eighteenth century. However, Williams (1988, p. 79) cites the late nineteenth century (primarily in America, but spreading quickly) as the period when the notion of the 'consumer' of products and services came to the fore. This period coincided with the development of, what Williams (1988, p. 79) describes as:

> Modern commercial *advertising* […] the creation of needs and wants and of particular ways of satisfying them, as distinct from and in addition to the notification of available supply which had been the main earlier function of *advertising* […].

Williams (1988), goes on to suggest that manufactures and their agents thus created the figure of 'the consumer'. Drescher (1992, pp. 322-323) cites the latter half of the nineteenth century as the historical period when producers first employed registered-trademarks [Thellefsen *et al* (2007, p. 63) describe a trademark as the legal term for a brand name] to differentiate and identify otherwise indistinguishable goods. Drescher mentions Quaker oats, which in 1877 became the world's first registered trademark for breakfast cereal. Williams (1988, p. 79) suggests that the term 'consume' became a more-generally-used term, as distinct from its specifically political/economic sense, by the mid-twentieth century. Aldridge (2003, pp. 14-15) writes:

> The consumer as a chooser is the property of neoclassical economics. Against this, rival disciplines, notably sociology and social anthropology, have emphasized other images [of the consumer], above all the consumer as communicator. Cultural studies has intervened in support of the consumer as hedonist/artist.

In cultural studies, Mackay (1997, p. 2) tells us that:

> Consumption is seen as an active process and often celebrated as pleasure […]. In postmodern accounts cultural consumption is seen as being the very material out of which we construct our identities: we become what we consume.

And, as Graeber (2011, p. 489) puts it, "a whole intellectual industry has developed over the past few decades around the study of consumption." As a recipient of a studentship, with my focus on problematizing 'consumption experiences', I share in the spoils of this economy.

As we saw in section 2.2 of this review, the range of phenomena now deemed 'consumable' has become extensive, if not exhaustive. Each of these 'product' types has the potential to develop a public image, which consumers may use as identity markers. Choosing one product, rather than another, may thus hinge on the 'image' as well as the functionality of the product. The product thus becomes a means of communication (to self and others), in addition to any other functions it performs.

2.4.2 Consuming as a Metaphor

According to exponents of 'cognitive linguistics', [Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Sweetser (1990), Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2002)] since human beings can not exist without food and drink, we may view the consumptive activities of eating and drinking as fundamental, and thus 'prototypical', examples of consumption.

Newman (1997, p. 214) writes, "The unique place of the human body in our daily lives makes the human body, and its associated parts and processes, conceptually basic." Wilk (2004, p. 16) suggests that, "Some things seem more like consumption than others because of their proximity and resemblance to the prototype [of eating/drinking and, by extension, burning]." According to Wilk, then, the term 'consumption' does not provide water-tight categorization, but, rather, provides relational benchmarks [eating/drinking/burning] which enable us to apply the term 'consumption', more or less loosely, in relation to non-food phenomena.

Having considered Newman (1997, p. 214), whose work on metaphor theory derives from cognitive linguistics, I deduce that we can extend the prototypical 'source domains' of eating and drinking to the 'target domains' of each or the product categories mentioned in Table 2.1 [self, others, places, 'things', organisations, and ideas]. These product categories, when broadly construed, potentially serve to classify any phenomena which occur in life. So, although I refer to them as 'product categories', I view them as extensively applicable to the full gamut of phenomena comprising our lives and environments. Following Newman (1997, pp. 214-216), we can start by identifying the various component parts of the overall processes of eating and drinking: hunger/thirst, intake, mastication/swallowing, digestion, nourishment, gustation, and excretion. Wilk (2004, p. 19) augments this prototypical sequence of eating/drinking-related events by inserting 'shopping' after 'hunger'. I have added cooking/preparation/presentation after 'shopping', to render the enumerated sequence of events more fine-tuned and inclusive. In Tables 2.2-2.7 we can see how, by metaphorical extension, I have mapped the componential actions, comprising eating and drinking, onto each of the six product

domains [self, others, places, 'things', organizations, and ideas] gleaned from Table 2.1. In simple terms, the processes involved when consuming the various types of products, equate, more-or-less, with the basic sequence of events involved in eating and drinking. Thus whilst we do not, for example, literally, feel hungry for a concert ticket, we may feel a desire (a hunger-like state) for the ticket. In the case of the 'self', as a product category, [Table 2.2] we can relate each of the componential processes of 'literal' eating and drinking, such as hunger/thirst, shopping, and cooking, to the 'figurative' consumption the self. The manifest self thus becomes a surrogate, metaphorical food - a consumable phenomenon - for the delectation of oneself and others. Cognitive linguists thus suggest that we can understand a concept, such as 'consumption', through the relation of various phenomena, which we class as instances of consumption, to the prototypical forms of consumption: eating, drinking, and burning.

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**SELF-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	
shop/procure/source	potentially-available-24/7
prepare/present/cook/assemble	dress/wash/maintain/care-for
ingest	see-self/hear-self/smell-self/touch-self/taste-self
chew/swallow	saliva/own-thoughts
digest/assimilate	come-to-terms-with/reconcile
nourish	self-satisfaction/self-loathing
gustation	pleasure/displeasure
excrete	

Table 2.2 Self-As-Food

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**OTHER/S-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	desire/need/want/feel-duty-towards
shop/procure/source	search-for/reach-out-to/select/reject
prepare/present	self-presentation
ingest	associate-with/look-at/touch/listen-to/smell/taste
chew/swallow	analyse-what-they-say
digest/assimilate	come-to-terms-with
nourish	find-an-interaction-life-enhancing-or-toxic
gustation	pleasure/pain
excrete	dissociate-from/'dump'

Table 2.3 Other(s)-As-Food

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**PLACE/S-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	wanderlust/indifference
shop/procure/source	research/enquire
prepare/present	plan/pack/travel
ingest	take-in: sights/sounds/tastes/ smells/textures/weather...
chew/swallow	gulp-down-stimuli
digest/assimilate	come-to-terms-with
nourish	fulfilling/lacklustre
gustation	pleasure/displeasure
excrete	

Table 2.4 Place(s)-As-Food

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**'THINGS'-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	crave/desire/need/want
shop/procure/source	buy/get/obtain/receive
prepare/present	arrange/compose/install/place
ingest	associate-with/employ/hear/see/ touch/smell/use/play-with
chew/swallow	analyse/chew-over
digest/assimilate	feel: reconciled-with/indifferent-to/antipathy-toward
nourish	life-giving/toxic
gustation	pleasure/displeasure
excrete	dispose-of/recycle/repair

Table 2.5 'Thing(s)'-As-Food

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**ORGANISATIONS-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	desire to: associate-with/dissociate-from
shop/procure/source	select/no-choice
prepare/present	impression-management
ingest	enter-building/meet-staff/visit-website/receive-emails/phone-calls
chew/swallow	ask-questions/orientate-oneself
digest/assimilate	assimilate-what-went-on
nourish	life-enhancing/debilitating-impact
gustation	enjoyment/fun/displeasure
excrete	dissociate-from

Table 2.6 Organisation(s)-As-Food

EATING/DRINKING (Source Domain)	**IDEAS-AS-FOOD** (Target Domain)
hunger/thirst	interest/thirst-for-knowledge
shop/procure/source	enquire/read/research
prepare/present	set-up-knowledge-storage-systems/flash-drives/book-shelves
ingest	gossip/read/listen-to-radio/watch-TV/search-Internet…
chew/swallow	chew-over/swallow-whole
digest/assimilate	integrate/form-a-point-of-view
nourish	feel: enriched-by/debased-by/upset-by
gustation	pleasure/pain
excrete	some-ideas-make-you-feel-sick

Table 2.7 Ideas-As-Food

Up to this point I have mentioned only physical consumption i.e., the use of the senses in eating-related, or eating-like, activities. Matters become more interesting when we employ Sweeter's (1990, p. 28) THE-MIND-AS-BODY metaphor. According to this metaphor, we may view the mind as if it had the properties and propensities that we would ordinarily expect to find in a free-standing, living organism. As with an actual living organism, we may view the mind as having its own physiological and psychological consumptive requirements. Viewed in this way, the mind lives off, and in, its immediate, intra-organismal, micro-environment - effectively nourished by its host-body's inner goings-on. In this manner, the

mind consumes the thoughts and sensations which populate its domain, within the individual consumer. Hirschman (1984, p. 115) writes:

> *In a phenomenological sense consumption consists of the generation of internal thoughts and/or sensations, which constitute the content of experience.*

Hirschman goes on to make the point that even when consumption comprises of the intake of 'external-to-the-self' stimuli, the processes of consuming entail the generation of intra-personal psychological-and-sensory-goings-on. So, in viewing the mind, itself, as a consuming organism, Sweetser's (1990) work invokes the notions of: the mind's-eye, the mind's ears, the mind's nose, the mind's mouth, and the mind's fingers. Ibarretxe-Antoñano (2002, p. 113) builds on Sweetser's work, again explaining that, "the mind is understood as a separate person, with its own bodily functions and necessities." This metaphorical mapping of the physical sense organs onto the functioning of the mind helps to explain how we can view thoughts and sensations, themselves, as consumable via the mind's sensorium. Just as the physical body consumes products from without; the mind consumes inner-body (phenomenological) 'products'. Interestingly, Sarukkai (2002, p. 473) compares consuming to perceiving, "Perception is consumption - a self-consumption." Sarukkai thus explicitly links the notion of 'self-perception' with that of 'consumption'. He describes this as a form of (metaphorical) cannibalism. But Noë (2009, p. 475) writes:

> To perceive something is not to consume it, just as it is not a matter of constructing, within our brains or minds, a model or picture or representation of the world without.

Noë continues (p. 482):

> What enables objects and their properties to show up for us in experience is the fact that they exist and that we have access to them. A theory of direct perception requires a theory of access.

I have only recently [June 2013] encountered this notion of us having direct access to the world - as apposed to us forming internal representations thereof. I feel it appropriate to acknowledge the existence of this point of view, without currently having the breadth of understanding required to either embrace or discount it. I make this point to highlight the truism that, when conducting research, one really can't look under every stone.

Schelling (1984, pp. 343-344), posits a concept of consuming that combines the *physical* consumption, of stimuli external to the consumer, with the *psychological* consumption of stimuli manifesting themselves within the consumer:

> We consume with our mouths and noses and ears and eyes and proprioceptors and skin and fingertips, and with the nerves that react to external stimuli, and internal hormones; we consume relief from pain and fatigue, itching and thirst. But we also consume by thinking. We consume past events that we can bring up from memory; future events that we can believe will happen; contemporary circumstances not physically present, like the respect of colleagues and the affection of our neighbours and the health of our children; and we can even tease ourselves into believing and consuming thoughts that are intended only to please. We consume good news and bad news.

As mentioned earlier, Perls *et al* (1951, p. 259) describe the totality of an individual's mind/body combo, along with its surrounding context, as an "organism/environment field".

2.4.3 The Field-Theoretical Perspective

Kurt Lewin (1952) developed the notion of Field Theory. Lewin asserted that any constituent aspect of a particular context (and/or any combination of aspects therein) may contribute to the behaviour (including the 'experience') of a person embedded within, and thus co-constituting, that field. Every new field has a unique configuration, never quite the same as before. Lewin (1946, p. 239), for example, writes:

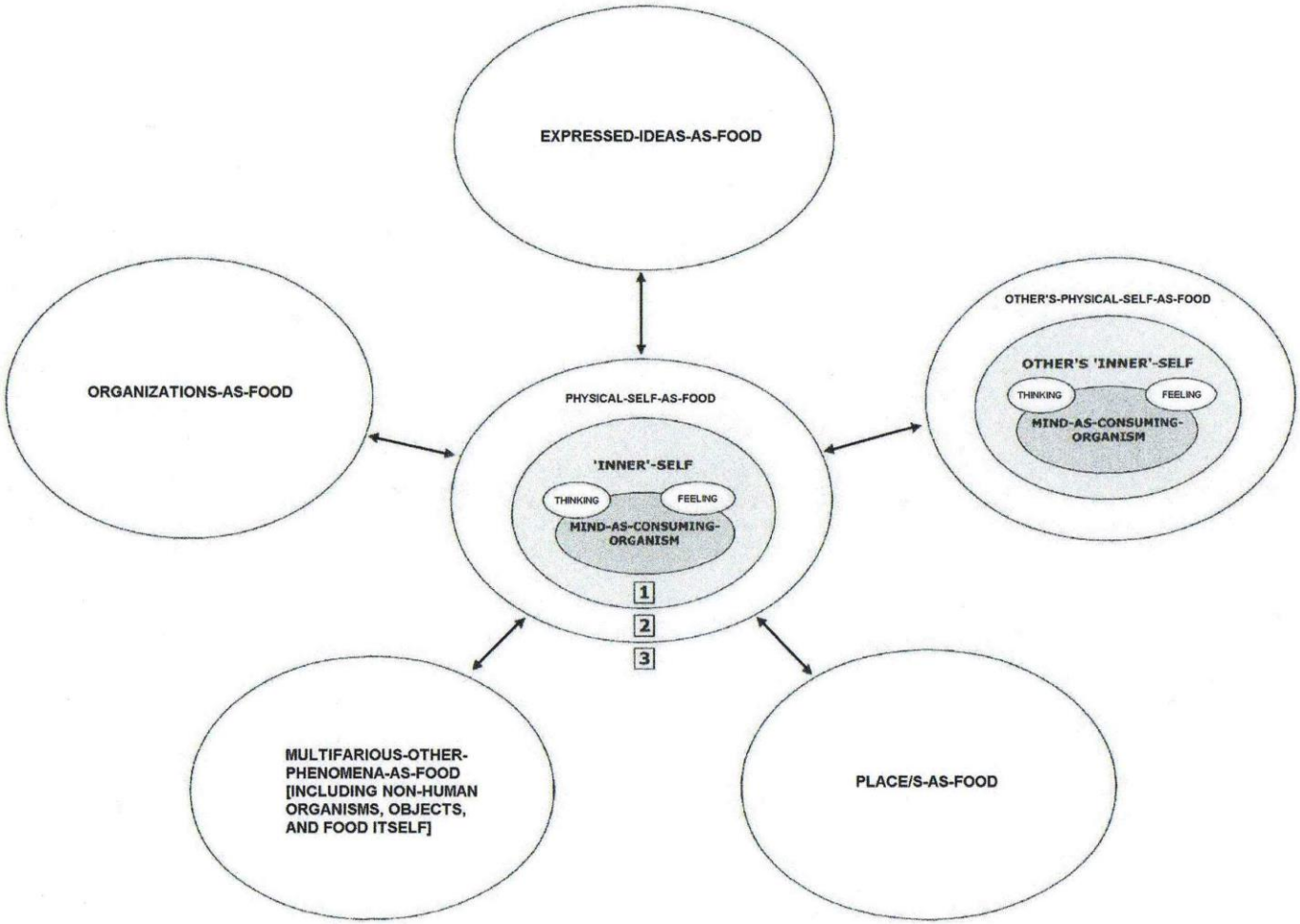
> In general terms, behavior *(B)* is a function (*F)* of the person *(P)* and of his environment (*E), B = F (P, E).* This statement is correct for emotional outbreaks as well as for "purposive" directed activities; for dreaming, wishing, and thinking, as well as for talking and acting.

Figure 2.2 comprises of a diagrammatic representation of an organism/environment field, viewed from the perspective of consuming. By replacing an attempt to isolate the experiential/behavioural impact of consuming particular products, with a field-theoretical perspective (Lewin 1946, pp. 238-241), we may view the entirety of any particular existential context or situation - such as a research conversation - as a 'field'. A person's experience and action, at any point in space-time will thus depend on the particular subset of organismic and environmental stimuli to which s/he simultaneously contributes to and attends to.

2.4.4 Concluding Section 2.4

I started this review by discussing the expansion of what constitutes a product - everything potentially qualifies as a 'product' when viewed from a liberal perspective. Bagozzi's theory of exchange sets a precedent for viewing the interactions occurring within an organism/environment field as, at the very least, 'marketing-like' phenomena - with their value-generating potential. The

metaphorical use of the term ‘consumption’ constitutes a perception-like phenomenon. And thus we arrive at a field-theoretical perspective in which the dualistic notions of ‘production’ and ‘consumption’ give way to an immersive, fluid interaction between organisms and their environments, in which discrete roles of ‘producer’ and ‘consumer’ get replaced by a fusion of these two roles. Indeed, I will subsequently bring into question the use of these economically-derived terms as a means of characterizing human being - even within ‘consumer research’.



[1] Region One ('Inner'-Self): comprises of the **thinking and feeling** that the MIND-AS-CONSUMING-ORGANISM consumes. Other people do not have direct access to this region, although they may make inferences about what goes on in there, based on: various observed data, self-projections, and hunches. We can think of this region as the realm of subjectivity.

[2] Region Two (Physical-Self): comprises of an individual's observable self, which s/he can see directly [if s/he has sight] and/or indirectly in a mirror or photo etc. The individual may also: hear, smell, taste, and touch aspects of his/her physical body. Others can also potentially: see, hear, smell, taste, and touch an individual's physical body. Surgeons can cut into this region, but they can not pull out **thinking** and **feeling**, as these remain in Region One, until expressed by the individual.

[3] Region Three (Environment): comprises of the world 'outside' each perceiving individual. This region comprises of all the organisms, places, things, organizations, and expressed ideas [and everything else - including 'empty space'] existing 'outside' the individual. The two-way arrows imply a potential for reciprocal consuming between self and aspects of the world 'outside' self. A more comprehensive map would show two-way arrows connecting all the various elements 'outside' the self, indicating relations of connection/interdependence between all aspects of the 'field'.

Figure 2.2 An Organism/Environment Field Viewed from the Perspective of Consumption

2.5 'Consumption Experiences'

2.5.1 Beginnings

> […] Kotler and Levy opened possibilities for studying hitherto neglected kinds of products such as those found in commercial communication in general and in entertainment, the arts, advertising, and the media in particular. Indeed, Kotler and Levy's expansive view tended to legitimate a sphere of interests that [...] [I], by temperament, […] found virtually irresistible - including music, visual art, movies, and television.
>
> - Holbrook (1995, p. 11)

Marketing/consumer-research academics regularly cite Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as the article that introduced the notion of experiential consumption. For example, Arnould and Thompson (2005, p. 869) tell us that Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) has its origins in calls by researchers for a broadening of the field to include the experiential, social, and cultural dimensions of consumption. They cite Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as trailblazers in this regard. Carù and Cova (2007, p. 3) cite Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as the "seminal article" that introduced the notion of experience into the study of consumption and marketing. And Friedmann (1986, p. 1) cites Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as the article that represents the 'experiential perspective' in his survey of the different eras in consumer research. Holbrook belatedly acknowledged other trailblazers of the 'experiential view'. In Holbrook (1995, p. 80) he wrote:

> As with any conceptual development, this shift in perspective had its roots in the earlier work of others. Had we known the literature better, we could have found clear anticipations of our viewpoint, traced obvious parallels with earlier writings,

> and done more to acknowledge the contributions of […] others […].

Holbrook goes on to mention certain theoretical forebears: Wroe Alderson, Harper Boyd, Sid Levy, Jack Jacoby, and Walter Woods. Holbrook continues (p. 81), "Our early failure to credit these intellectual predecessors in enough detail resulted from simple ignorance."

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 135) posited the 'experiential view' as a counterpoint to the, then, prevailing 'information processing view':

> The information processing view conjures up an image of the consumer as a problem solver engaged in goal-directed activities of searching for information, retrieving memory cues, weighing evidence, and arriving at carefully considered judgemental evaluations.

In the conclusion to their paper, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 139) note that:

> […] neither problem-directed nor experiential components can safely be ignored. By focusing single mindedly on the consumer as information processor, recent consumer research has tended to neglect the equally important experiential aspects of consumption, thereby limiting our understanding of consumer behaviour.

On the same topic Schelling (1984, p. 344) writes:

> So we have at least two distinct roles for our minds to play: that of the information processing and reasoning machine by which we choose what to consume out of the array of things that our resources can be exchanged for, and that of the pleasure machine or consuming organ, the generator of direct consumer satisfaction.

The authors of the last two quotes argue for the inclusion of both approaches, [information processing, and the experiential aspects of consumption] rather than encouraging a blanket focus on one or the other.

2.5.2 Definitions

Holbrook (1995, p. 101) defines consumption experiences as:

> […] the experiences that occur when some living organism acquires, uses, or disposes of any product that might achieve a goal, fulfill a need, or satisfy a want. In short, consumer research encompasses virtually all human activities regarded from the viewpoint of consummation.

Carù and Cova (2003, p. 270) write:

> For researchers of consumer behaviour, an experience is above all a personal occurrence, often with important emotional significance, founded on the interaction with stimuli which are the products and services consumed […].

According to Carù and Cova (2007, p. 38), "An experience is a subjective episode that customers live through when they interact with a firms product or service offer." And Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 137) write, "[…] this [experiential] viewpoint calls attention to the experiences with a product that one gains by actually consuming it." The last batch of definitions, of the term 'consumption experience', position it as the experience triggered by the consumption of a specific product or service. However, as we have seen in our discussion of co-branding earlier, [Section 2.2.4] we do not consume individual products in a vacuum; they always form part of a field which includes other elements as well as the consumer him/herself - and perhaps others.

In their article in which they adopt a field-theoretical perspective, Hirschman and Holbrook (1986, p. 216) write:

> Consumption, we believe, is not something that people *do* to products (i.e., goods or services); rather consumption involves the experiences accumulating in consumers as they interact with products.

They go on (p. 217):

> Thus, on this view, consumption consists fundamentally of experiences generated during interaction with products. The product may be a good, or service, sign or significate, a tangible or intangible, a thing or concept; in short, it may be any aspect of a person's environment. The consuming situation involves an interaction between that person and environment. The consumption experience responds to the nature of the person environment interaction.

I feel in total agreement with the last quotation. Hirschman and Holbrook go on to write (p. 220), "In addition, we follow several authors in regarding the consumption situation as a *person-environment interaction.*" It seems that Hirschman and Holbrook go along with the idea that a person may consume any aspect of his/her environment, not just the ostensible/designated object of consumption.

Holt (1995, p. 15) broadens the notion of consumption beyond the experiences one hosts whilst consuming, "One important implication [of his research] is that consuming is never just an experience, a disinterested end in itself." Holt develops a four-part typology of 'consumption practices'. Through observing people consuming baseball games, Holt suggests that people consume for: (1) the experiences that the process of consuming engenders, (2) for the sense-of-self that the consumption of the host product helps to establish and/or consolidate - what Holt calls the 'integration' of the

product into one's self-concept, (3) to classify or position oneself in relation to others - creating a sense of group-belonging/identity, and (4) for the fun of it - which Holt defines as the ways in which consumers use their acts of consumption as a basis for communing and socialising with others, so that the consumers develop a 'shared experience' and/or a playful dialogue based on their respective experiences.

Holt's perspective interests me in the sense that he observes that consumers employ the object of consumption in a variety of ways. Yes the consumption of baseball (to use Holt's example) does give rise to experiences; but consumers also use the baseball offering for self-definitional/classificatory purposes, and as the basis for interpersonal sharing. Thus, for Holt, 'to consume' means something more than simply 'taking in' or registering a product stimulus; for him the act of consumption encompasses the employment of products/services as aids in productive social performances. I think this raises an interesting ambiguity. I note that we do employ [and thus consume] products in self-definitional practices, however, this strikes me as a combination of production and consumption. Wilk (2004, p. 23) cites the terms "productive consumption" and "consumptive production". For him, these terms refer to the work involved in shopping, self-assembly of products, and the work of familiarising oneself with a product's features and its mode of operation, and the like. He continues, "In the real world, there are no simple boundaries between consumption and production or work and leisure." Kotler (1986a, 1986b) highlights the notion of 'prosumers', "people who produce many of their own goods and services." Kotler (1986b) writes, "salad bars are increasingly popular in restaurants because many people prefer to 'compose' their own salads." Kotler (1986a) frequently uses the example of 'people cooking their own food' as an archetypal

'prosumer' activity - one in which production and consumption go hand-in-hand. Kotler (1986b) ends on this note, "People want to see themselves as cause, not effect; as players, not spectators, in producing their life results." Humphreys and Grayson (2008, p. 3) write:

> By conventional practice, the organization (or set of organizations) that grows, harvests, roasts, and sometimes grinds the beans is labelled the 'producer', whereas the person who brews the coffee in order to drink it is labelled the 'consumer'. But, importantly, both producer and consumer work to create the value in the cup of coffee. The creation of value does not necessarily distinguish these two roles.

Ritzer (2009, pp. 10, 12) writes:

> The consumers of pornography are increasingly themselves also its producers. They may either photograph or video themselves, or use 'friends' to do the 'work'. […] It may well be that instead of shifting between production and consumption, we should have always been focusing on prosumption.

And Xie *et al* (2008, p. 116) make the point that:

> Once a product has been purchased it can be used in many ways: consumed "as is", changed in form or composition, or added to other ingredients to produce concoctions in which any given input may no longer be recognizable.

The last batch of quotes underscores the fact that academics have acknowledged the problematic of trying to create a watertight distinction between so-called 'production' and 'consumption'. Similarly, in a quote I used earlier, Firat and Dholakia (1998, p. 96) wrote:

> […] consumption is not a mere act of destroying, or using things. It is also not the end of the (central) economic cycle,

> but an act of production of experiences and selves or self images […].

I view the complex processes of assemblage, which constitute self-expression, as productive activities which incorporate the consumption of products and services. When a painter paints, s/he consumes tubes of paint, paint brushes, canvas, and turpentine etc.; but I suggest that we do not ordinarily view this activity as primarily an act of consumption. Indeed, according to Kotler (1986a), "In Japan, some of the 'famous' scroll painters made their own brushes, mixed their own paints, and even made their own paper." This, according to Kotler, made them model 'prosumers'. We tend to view painting as a productive practice that involves the consumption of resources. Having said that, Hirschman (1983, p. 49) has suggested that we can view the painter as someone who consumes his/her own creative process as it unfolds, "In self-orientated marketing the creator may serve as the initial consumer of that which he/she creates." Thus the painter consumes his/her own emergent painted image. In this way, the creative/productive act of painting goes hand-in-hand with the consumption of material resources and the artistic process itself, by the painter. And, of course, when completed the painting becomes an object of consumption for others - assuming it gets displayed. And yet, nominally, 'consumption' takes precedence if we call painting a 'consumption experience'.

Carù and Cova (2003, p. 276) make an interesting distinction between 'consumption experiences' and 'consumer experiences'. For them a 'consumer experience' involves a market relation, involving financial exchange. A 'consumption experience', however, need not involve a direct commercial component. The authors list three types of 'consumption experience' which do not centre on

market phenomena: (1) family experiences, (2) friendship experiences, and (3) citizenship experiences. They write (p. 276):

> If marketing is exchange, then when there is no [monetary] exchange the individual no longer lives experiences as a consumer, but experiences of consumption which are outside the market.

Here we see an attempt to keep commercial and non-commercial worlds apart. However, if I go out with my mum ['family experience'], socially, to a café for a meal, we travel there in a car, both dressed in purchased clothes, breathing the ambient, un-commoditised, air. We cannot, it seems to me, separate commercial and non-commercial spheres - they interpenetrate.

Carù and Cova (2003, p. 271) quote Arnould *et al* (2002) who posit the idea of dividing-up the consumption process into four, interrelated stages: (1) 'pre-consumption experience', (2) 'purchase experience', (3) 'core consumption experience', and (4) 'remembered/nostalgia consumption experience'. According to this view, we cannot pin down consumption to one specific point in time. Similarly, Holbrook (1995, p. 88) refers to: "the acquisition, usage, and disposition of *products.*" Rather like the baby that starts its life as twinkles in its parents' eyes, consumption begins with the first intimations of an idea, desire, need, gravitational-attraction, and so forth. To study a complete consumption cycle may prove impossible, since the 'remembered consumption episode' remains open to the vagaries of re-telling, subject to mood-changes, and the retro-active impact of current experiences (Cowley 2007). And, as already stated, the very notion of a 'consumption cycle', nominally at least, leaves out constructive and productive activities - unless we co-opt all creative expression under the auspices of the term 'consumption'

2.5.3 Aesthetic, Hedonic, and Symbolic Consumption

Holbrook (1995, pp. 55-56) makes an interesting confession:

> In the late 1970s, I began referring to this general stream of research [pertaining to advertising, the arts, entertainments and the media] as 'consumer aesthetics' (Holbrook, 1980). I thought then (and still do) that one can best position one's work by designating a trademark, logo, or slogan to set it apart and to capture people's attention. In this spirit, the term *consumer aesthetics* has proven useful. Nonetheless, this 'trademark' is just a fancy name for studies of commercial communication.

Here Holbrook exemplifies the way in which researchers may create research-stream 'brands' that compete to attract increased adoption by the marketing and consumer research sectors.

Holbrook (1980) uses the term 'esthetic' to designate a category of products [the arts, entertainments and media] and also a particular type of experiential response - one involving cognitive and sensory pleasure. Holbrook uses the term 'hedonic' to describe one of the aspects of aesthetic response. Likewise, in defining the term 'hedonic consumption' Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, p. 92) mention the "esthetic, intangible and subjective aspects of consumption". And the term 'symbolic consumption', whilst ostensibly referring to both the denotative and connotative meanings associated with particular offerings, has an inescapable experiential dimension. As Levy (1959, p. 119) puts it:

> It will suffice to say that in casual usage symbol is a general term for all instances where experience is mediated rather than direct; where an object, action, word, picture, or complex behavior is understood to mean not only itself but also some other ideas or feelings.

Thus Levy makes the salient point that symbols may give rise to feelings as well as cognitive 'meanings'. For example, a particular type of motor car may symbolise wealth and prestige whilst also giving rise to sensory responses within consumers of the vehicle.

Friedmann and Lessig (1986, p. 1 of 9) state:

> The central notion of aesthetic consumption is that consumers may attend to, perceive and appreciate a product for itself, without regard to the utilitarian functions [or] benefits it may provide the consumer.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, p. 96) give examples of, what they call, 'esthetic products', "audio records and tapes, novels, plays, movies, opera, sporting events and so forth." They go on to make the point that, "[…] all products can be hedonically experienced by consumers […]". Venkatraman and MacInnis (1985, p. 8 of 10) underscore this latter point when they report on research which demonstrates that:

> Hedonic consumers perceive the hedonic aspects of a product, whether it is a bathroom tissue, movies, or opera. Cognitive consumers, on the other hand, see the practical/functional value of a product, be it football or peanut butter.

And for Holbrook (1995, pp. 11-12) the term "consumer aesthetics" pertains to:

> […] consumer's appreciative responses to artworks, to entertainment, to advertising, to the media, or to other products that provide aesthetic experiences ranging in intensity from the simplest hedonic pleasure to the most profound ecstatic rapture […].

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, p. 92) define hedonic consumption as:

> […] *those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products.*

If we relate these latest quotes to the previous discussion, in this chapter, we can perhaps deduce that, if a person's experience derives from his/her total interaction with his/her micro-environment, then, any aspect of his/her moment-to-moment experience and action can have a multisensory dimension. Hirschman (1984, p. 117), for example, cites the smelling of flowers and making love as examples of sensory consumption. Holbrook (1995, p. 135) refers to the consuming, "of services provided for free (by family members [and pets])". And Gould (2008, p. 413) writes about, "the consumption of light, energy, sound, sensation and thought, whether or not product related." As one reads a newspaper one may host a multisensory experience if, for example, one looks at an advert [symbolic], as one drinks a cup of tea [hedonic] whilst reading well-written prose [aesthetic]. Furthermore, even [perhaps 'especially'] the use of utilitarian products - such as a sponge, detergent, and water, used whilst washing a car - may coincide with daydreaming/fantasy as a means of spicing up the mundanity of the car-washing process.

To avoid going round in circles here, it will perhaps suffice to say that the terms 'aesthetic', 'hedonic' and 'symbolic' do not readily allow for watertight separability, they overlap somewhat. These three research tributaries flow into the unified river of human being.

2.5.4 Value - Incorporating 'Co-Creation'

As touched on briefly earlier, some consumer researchers describe the positive and/or negative responses that consumers have whilst interacting with other people and products as the 'value' that

consumers derive from those encounters. Vargo and Lush (2008, p. 7) write, "Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary." And later they make an important qualifying statement (p. 9):

> However, to the extent that the word experience is intended in a phenomenological sense, we are comfortable with the terms ['experiential' and 'phenomenological'] being used interchangeably, as we have done on a number of occasions.

In other words, the consumer ultimately determines 'value' through the nature and quality of the experience that s/he has whilst consuming a particular product/offering. The term 'co-creation of value' designates, what Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 8) define as the, "*joint* creation of value by the company and the consumer." This contrasts with the view that those making the offer 'provide' the value. Vargo and Lusch (2004, p. 11) put paid to this latter notion with their assertion that, "the enterprise can only make value propositions". They go on to write, "the consumer must determine value and participate in creating it through the process of coproduction." Thus any offering constitutes, at best, a value proposition. When we watch a movie, the movie does not 'contain' value, which we simply swallow whole, like a pill. We must, rather, generate positive and/or negative value through our organismal goings-on whilst watching the movie. However, the product-centricity of this way of thinking seems at odds with the field-theoretical orientation that I have mooted in this chapter. In other words, the 'value' experienced as one consumes a particular product may derive from other elements that co-constitute the person/environment 'field' that the particular product contributes to.

Holbrook (1999, pp. 5-9) defines value in a compact, yet complex, manner, "I define customer value as an interactive relativistic

preference experience." This means *interactive* in the sense of an interaction between a perceiving individual and some physical or mental object(s). The term *relativistic* has three senses. First I can say I prefer water to beer, but I can't say that I like water more than you like water. In other words, I must make 'utility comparisons' between objects but not comparisons relating to perceiving individuals. In the second sense, relativistic means that individuals value the same phenomena differently. And, thirdly, relativistic means that value depends on the context in which an individual makes a value judgement. The term *preference* functions as a synonym for the idea of 'a positive evaluation judgement'. And the term *experience* relates to the idea that, "customer value resides *not* in the product purchased, not in the brand but rather in the consumption experience(s) derived therefrom […]".

Ballentyne and Varey (2006, p. 335) bring the various threads, which I have discussed, together:

> […] *a customer's value-in-use begins with the enactment of value propositions, and the development of reciprocal value propositions* […].

2.5.5 Concluding Section 2.5

The phenomenon of 'consumption experience(s)' has become a widely accepted object of study. Nominally starting from the early 1980s, but traceable back to the 1950s, marketing academics, and consumer researchers, have focused on the experiential aspects of product- and service-use. However, now, because of the inclusivity of what we might classify as 'products' and 'services', we have reached the stage where, at least one prominent marketing academic, namely Morris B. Holbrook, takes the view that we can think of all human experiences as 'consumption experiences' (Woodward and Holbrook 2013, p. 327). When broadly construed,

the terms ‘consumption’ and ‘consuming’ may apply to the whole of daily life. Through extension, via the MIND-AS-BODY metaphor, the notions of the mind’s eye, the mind’s nose, the mind’s ears, the mind’s tongue, and the mind’s fingertips come into play. When we perceive through our five senses we ‘consume’ the perceived phenomena. We thus consume thoughts, sensations, and other ‘inner-body’ goings-on, as well as consuming external-to-self phenomena. This expansive conception of consumption and consuming provides warrant for treating the research process, including - but not limited to - video-recorded research conversations, as ‘legitimate’ embodiments of the various marketing-related concepts mentioned earlier in the review. Specifically, I have in mind the LIFE-AS-PRODUCT-BUFFET metaphor, which entails ‘prosumers’ going about their ‘business’ of reciprocal value-creation.

Viewed from this perspective, the idea of studying people’s responses to a focal product, such as a movie, a book, or a musical concert, gives way to an approach which views each moment as comprising of a dynamic constellation of elements, which collectively constitute the entire ‘field’ of ‘play’. This field-theoretical perspective undergirds my research initiative. By taking seriously the conceptual-broadening-work of some of my academic colleagues, I dispense with the pursuit of ‘consumption experiences’ associated with particular products and instead treat people’s moment-to-moment experiences and actions, within research processes, themselves, as the foci and loci (respectively) of my study. In this way I have not so much discovered a gap in the literature; rather I have, by taking ‘broadening’ to its furthest reaches, arrived at a place where products, marketing, and ‘consumption experiences’ have become so exhaustively pervasive,

that we no longer need focus on particular 'commercial' offerings to justify our research.

An obvious classificatory problem accompanies the adoption of this point of view. If the whole of life, and not just 'commercial life', becomes the subject of marketing thought, then 'life processes' and 'marketing and consumption' become synonymous. Some have already crossed this conceptual threshold. Once we call all of our experiences 'consumption experiences' we have acceded to a world-view colonised by a commercially-co-opted metaphor. Attempts to ameliorate this state of affairs by showing that the term 'consumption' has its roots in the human processes of eating, drinking, and burning, do little to change the vast connotational freight that the term 'consumption' triggers in people at this time in world history. Rebranding the term 'consumption' seems, to me, an unlikely solution.

In a nutshell, what a person notices links, inseparably, to what that person does. Consumption, it seems, forms one half of a binary opposition, namely, 'production' versus 'consumption'. The coining of the term 'prosumption' constituted an attempt, by some academics, to reconcile these inseparable processes. What do I notice and what do I do? What do I experience and which actions do I perform? My research becomes the study of human being, as people, nominally, engage in 'research'. Surely 'consumption' must become subsumed within life at large, rather than life becoming subsumed within marketing-speak? We thus reach a deeply political moment. We must choose how we characterise our life and times. "Beyond 'Consumption Experiences'" we find 'experiaction', but more of that later.

If I apply the foregoing discussion to my own research initiative, then each field-embedded individual, in a social interaction, co-constitutes a value proposition for the other. I say that each individual "co-constitutes a value proposition for the other" because the individuals inescapably reside within their encompassing context, and this all-encompassing context/field provides the individuals embedded therein with the multifarious means of value creation. This amalgam of latent value-triggers clearly extends beyond the interacting humans. Each person forms only a part of the interacting-other's micro-environment. As I promised earlier, I have sought to demonstrate that the conceptual infrastructure already exists within marketing-thought to support this way of thinking. Specifically, if we think of a person as a 'product-amongst-products', and if the whole existential field constitutes a product-buffet, then product-centricity makes no sense since, even when distracted from the ostensibly-focal product, say a movie, a person can not readily avoid alighting on some other 'product', whether within or outside of him/herself. In other words, rather than pursuing a person's response to a particular product, it makes sense, from a field-theoretical perspective, to open oneself to whatever a person attends to - from moment-to-moment - whilst s/he apparently, or nominally, engages with a designated 'main event', such as a movie.

2.6 My Research Agenda

Aldridge (2003, pp. 7-8) draws our attention to, broadly, two possibilities in relation to the study of consuming: (1) one may focus on the "economic models of consumption" which relate to, for example, the supply of, and demand for, products and services, or (2) one may explore the more subjective, irrational aspects of consuming. We may think of these as macro- and micro-

perspectives, respectively. The first, with its focus on the generalised/segmented consumer, contrasts with the second, a focus on the particular goings-on of the specific, individuated consumer. And, perhaps more importantly for my research initiative, we can make a further distinction between (a) a view of consuming which specifically focuses on the consumption of commercial goods and services, and (b) a view of consuming which conceptualises it as a pervasive social/psychological phenomenon, that transcends a focus on goods and services, and thus extends to the whole panoply of phenomena comprising everyday life. This includes: self and self-awareness, others (including animals, plants, and the like), places, 'objects', organisations, ideas, and so on. In the discipline of consumer research, the terms 'product' and 'service' usually serve to delimit which phenomena researchers, working in the domain, can 'legitimately' study. Holbrook (1995, p. 11), for example, writes:

> […] Kotler and Levy [(1969a), Kotler (1972)] opened possibilities for studying hitherto neglected kinds of products such as those found in commercial communication in general and in entertainment, the arts, advertising, and the media in particular. Kotler and Levy's expansive view tended to legitimate a sphere of interests that […] [I] found virtually irresistible - including music, visual art, movies, and television.

Aldridge (2003, p. 5) describes the concept of 'consumption' as "contested", moreover, "It is in the nature of such concepts that no agreement about their definition will ever be achieved; the contest is interminable." Stephen Gould, a consumer researcher, addresses the ambiguity and lack of clarity with regard to what constitutes 'real' consumption. He refers to Schelling (1984) [cited earlier] (Gould 1993, pp. 204-205):

> […] Schelling […] in defining the mind as a consuming organ went further than most consumer researchers would in his concept of consumption as including the consumption of events, memories, and so on which do not necessarily involve products or services. […] While we can deproblematize his concept of consumption by limiting our investigation to mental activity which is consumption-related in terms of actual products and services, we nevertheless still run into the problem that the boundaries between consumption and non-consumption are not clear. […] [I] leave open the question of how permeable the boundaries should be for future exploration and discussion.

And Ariely and Norton (2009, p. 477, 478) point out that:

> […] although one view of consumption divides consumption into consuming the physical (food, water) compared with consuming the psychological (ideas, information), the sociological/anthropological view suggests that this division may be artificial: Conceptual consumption is implicated in even the most basic consumption acts, such as eating or drinking, and is therefore paramount. […] We suggest that consumer behaviour is fundamentally and increasingly the study of conceptual consumption, broadly defined across many domains of consumption.

How can we cleanly separate the thoughts and sensations attributable to a particular product stimulus, from thoughts and concomitant sensory activity which may have derived from, say, a prior act of consumption? Christopher Bollas (1992, p. 3) writes:

> As we inhabit this world of ours, we amble about in a field of pregnant objects that contribute to the dense psychic textures that constitute self experience. […] In this respect, then, the objects of our world are potential forms of transformation. [Value propositions] When we select any series of objects - such as listening to a particular record, then telephoning a particular person, then reading from a particular book - we transform our inner experience by eliciting new psychic textures that bring us into differing areas of potential being.

We may view Bollas, here, as writing about a series of different products consumed in succession, and the cumulative, and dynamic, experiential impact of this on the individual consumer. Solomon and Assael (1987), in contrast to Bollas, focus on, what they call, "*product constellations*". They define these as (p. 191):

> […] clusters of complementary products, specific brands, and/or consumption activities used by consumers to define, communicate, and enact social roles.

They go on to write:

> Although it is clear that many products possess symbolic meaning for consumers, it is also apparent that in many cases no single product in isolation defines a social situation. Instead, consumers look to the total collection of cues in the environment to decode the meanings present there and to structure their behavior accordingly […].

And later Solomon and Assael (1987, p. 198) write, "The consumer must amass a collection of symbolic 'props' which permits him or her to credibly play these [social] roles." Thus we can see how Solomon and Assael invoke the notion of theatrical 'props' in their discussion of the staging of social selves. This accords with Gibbs (2002, p. 26), who states:

> It is important to be able to describe the individual elements of mise-en-scène, and it is important to consider each element's potential for expression. But it is worth remembering from the outset that these elements are most productively thought of in terms of their *interaction* rather than individually - in practice, it is the interplay of elements that is significant.

Whether in the dramatic arts, marketing, or social settings, the ones making the 'offer' must consider how the contents and

organisation of their managed micro-environments, in toto, impact on their respective audiences.

To recap then, we have seen that the theatrical/cinematic concept of 'mise-en-scène', when it manifests in relation to retail environments, becomes 'experience engineering' (Carbone and Haeckel 1994). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) called the way that people seek to control what others perceive (by regulating aspects of self and environment) 'impression management'. Concomitantly, we can call the individual components that comprise a given scenario: 'properties' in the theatre/cinema, 'clues' or 'products' in a commercial space, and 'objects' in a social context. I have emphasised the interrelatedness of these domain-boundary-crossing concepts and practices en route to problematizing the domain-specific notion of 'consumption experiences'.

Gould (1991, pp. 195, 197) straddles the fine line between the commercial and the non-commercial when he writes about how he manipulates his moment-to-moment experience [what he calls his "perceived vital energy"] through, both, what he partakes of and what he partakes in:

> [A]s I discuss how I experience and manage my vital energy in consumption, it should be kept in mind that I am speaking of the everyday phenomena of immediately bodily felt (noticeable) experience […] i.e., sensations and their mediating desires, moods, emotions, and thought […]. The gestalt of the perceived effects of these sensations, affect, and cognitive phenomena constitutes what I call "perceived vital energy." […] [W]hen envisioning potential energy states, selecting desired ones, and so forth, the individual may also consider engaging in nonconsumption-orientated activities, such as sleeping, lovemaking, meditating, and so on, rather than product use operations. [Note however that Hirschman (1984, p. 117) includes "smelling flowers" and "making love" as examples of "sensory consumption" and Holbrook (1995, p.

> 119) characterizes "loving a cuddly pet" as an "emotionally complex" "consumption phenomena"] Thus, while the process of energy regulation through these activities is similar to that for product use, it is important to note that sometimes a consumer may actually make a choice between engaging in a consumption activity or a nonconsumption activity […] (e.g., I might choose to meditate to calm down, play calming music to do so, or do both). In a related manner, we might note that the individual will take the resultant energy state as a base for further desires and actions no matter whether they come to be expressed in terms of consumption or other activities.

Carù and Cova (2003, p. 282) write:

> [P]ractitioners [researchers, managers, professionals - involved in marketing] must be able to take the full breadth of a phenomenon such as experience, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the commercial to the non-commercial.

The last two quotations point to the idea that if we grant an individual behavioural and perceptual liberty, allowing him/her to engage with the world freely via his mind/body, then we can *not* expect to cleanly separate the commercial aspects of the 'field' from the non-commercial aspects. An individual's focal awareness will determine the particular mix of phenomena that s/he notices and acts on. However, Hirschman and Holbrook (1986, p. 224) deal with the issue - of the non-commercial components in 'consumption experiences' - in another way. They bundle any 'extra-curricular' experiential content - such as distractions and incidentals - in with the experience resulting from the consumption of the 'main' consumption object. They write:

> […] consumption consists fundamentally of experiences generated during interaction with products. The product may be a good or service, sign or significate, a tangible or intangible, a thing or concept; in short it may be any aspect of a person's environment.

Thus, for Hirschman and Holbrook (1986), whatever experience a person hosts, *whilst* consuming a particular product, becomes his/her 'consumption experience'. The 'consumption experience' consists of the experience that *coincides* with the consumption of a particular product, such as a movie. In contrast to this, I propose, at the outset, that we bring into question this specific-product-centric orientation and, in its stead, posit a field-wide person-centred orientation - an approach that follows the vagaries of an individual's focal attention, rather than encouraging (implicitly or explicitly) the expression of focal-product noticings.

I suggest that when viewed from a field-theoretical standpoint, the object of study for 'consumer researchers', interested in 'consumer experience', becomes the individual's moment-to-moment 'give' and 'take' in relation to his/her organism/environment field. Hirschman and Holbrook (1986, p. 213) quote Laudan (1977, p. 80), "[…] one's views about the appropriate *methods* of inquiry are generally compatible with one's views about the *objects* of inquiry." I have described the manner in which, at the outset, I intend to re-think consuming in the light of a field-theoretical orientation. I will now briefly address the methodological implications of adopting the proposed perspective.

In the rough and tumble of everyday life, people do not operate like scientifically-calibrated consuming units. Consumer researchers can *not* simply pop a product sample into the belly of a microwave-oven-like consuming machine, which will burn-up the product sample and furnish the researcher with a black box recording of the exact nature of the sample's experiential impact on the consuming unit. On the contrary, people living their daily lives consume a host of phenomena, often in an oscillating and overlapping manner,

perhaps focusing, variously, on a product's attributes, their own aberrant thoughts, uncontrollable visceral sensations, as well as an array of other commercial and non-commercial phenomena.

The flux of people's focal attention renders the notion of a clean-burning consumption-machine problematical. I can't, in good faith, treat people as if they lived in a smokeless-fuel zone, where they can only burn the 'legally sanctioned' fuel i.e. products/services. One can understand that consumer researchers may wish to analyse particular types of 'fuel', the resultant 'smoke', the 'heat generated', and 'the speed at which it burns', and the like; however, a person's experiences and actions do not (apart from in sterile experimental conditions) lend themselves to an isolationist treatment, in terms of stimulus-response.

Instead of predetermining the consumption-object of interest, in a particular setting, and focusing on responses to the consumption of that specific object, I envisage observing how individuals [including myself] experience and act from moment to moment. In other words, my agenda comprises of focusing on person/environment dynamics themselves. This will allow me to address goings-on 'live' as they occur within the research process. Indeed some researchers have, implicitly and explicitly, called for such an approach. As Shotter (2006, p. 198) puts it:

> It is not a matter of what an outcome can be attributed to after the event, but a matter of getting inside the event as it is happening to describe the unfolding invitations, barriers, and resistances at work in each unfolding moment, that are in fact shaping people's actions within the event.

To mix my metaphors still further: seen through a field-theoretical lens, 'products' and 'services' take their places alongside manifold

other ‘props’ and ‘actors’ in the staging of, what Aztec Camera (1990) memorably describe as, the “one-take movie” that we call life. I consider myself a student of this ‘big picture’, operating from the perspective of a participant observer.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address the methodological implications resulting from my review of the literature relating to consumption and 'consumption experiences'. In short, some consumer researchers have suggested that any aspect the 360°-'inner'-'outer' existential 'field' may momentarily become the 'object' for some form of consuming. In taking this broad view seriously, it became evident to me that I did not need to posit a focal object or 'product', as has become routine in consumer research, rather, any aspect of human being would suffice as an exemplar of 'consuming' and 'producing' conduct - broadly construed. Thus the contextualised research conversation, itself, seemed as relevant a place to start as any other when beginning to reconsider the universal applicability of the notions of consuming and producing.

I gravitated to existential-phenomenology because, prima facie, when introduced to the orientation at graduate school, it struck me as the most touchy-feely, experience-centred, research tradition on offer. In particular, Gestalt therapists draw heavily on existential-phenomenological thought, and so my early reading focused on the works of Fritz Perls, a co-founder of Gestalt therapy. The references for this chapter include some of those books.

After introducing some foundational tenets of existential-phenomenology, I go on to discuss how those existential-phenomenological basics informed my approach within the research conversations. I then discuss how I went about recruiting my volunteers. I finally address the most salient ethical issues pertaining to my 'data collection' process.

I have chosen to present my approach to data analysis in the next chapter. I did not want to overload the reader in the form of one long, dense chapter here. Furthermore, I wanted to emphasise the distinctiveness of my own approach to data analysis in a stand-alone setting.

3.2 Defining Existential-Phenomenology

Valle *et al* (1989, p. 6) write:

> From its very name, existential-phenomenological psychology is quite obviously the result of a blending of two interrelated perspectives, existentialism and phenomenology. Although existentialism and phenomenology constitute complementary approaches, certain distinctions can be made between them.

Valle *et al* (1989, p. 6) go on to mention two twentieth-century existentialists, Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger, and characterise the existential orientation as seeking to address:

> […] the concrete existence of the individual person and attempt[ing] to elucidate the fundamental themes with which human beings invariably struggle […]: joy, despair, love, freedom, and choice […].

Greetham (2006, p. 255) suggests that, "If any single principle constitutes the doctrine of existentialism it is that freedom and choice are central facts of human nature." In terms of my own research initiative, this issue relates, for example, to my focus on the degrees of perceptual and actional liberty that a researcher/research-volunteer can exercise within the framework of the overall research process. The term 'existentialism', then, represents a few core concepts with a bearing on my project: a focus on concrete physical and experiential facts, a focus on the

momentary choices people make, along with the degree of freedom that human beings can exercise, in the microcosm of the research process.

The term 'phenomenology', according to Churchill and Richer (2000, p, 168) pertains to:

> […] the turning of one's regard towards the multiplicity of experiences wherein everything to which we relate shows itself. In simpler terms, phenomenology is the disclosure of things or events as they occur *for someone,* with the ultimate aim of uncovering and articulating the modes of presence that co-constitute, and thus make possible, the perception of all things and events.

The phrase, "everything to which we relate" in the last quotation, pertains both to 'external' [to a perceiving human being] 'objects' and to 'internal' [to a perceiving human being] goings-on. I will return to the topic of phenomenology towards the end of this section. Suffice it to say here that, taken together, the compound term 'existential-phenomenology' (according to von Eckartsberg 1998, pp, 8, 16) means, "the application of the phenomenological method to the perennial problems of human existence." He continues:

> With some justification, we can say that the mystery of existential-phenomenology is concealed in the *hyphen* itself. It indicates the difficult expressive problem of languaging the simultaneity and interpretation of both living and thinking, of spontaneous enactment and reflective explication.

I will proceed, then, by spelling out the main tenets which comprise existential-phenomenological-thought and which pertain to my own project.

3.3 Some Tenets of Existential-Phenomenology

3.3.1 Co-constitutionality/Field Theory

Valle *et al* (1989, p. 7) write:

> The major (and perhaps the most critical) issue is that people are not viewed as just objects in nature. Rather, the existential-phenomenological psychologist speaks of the total, indissoluble unity or interrelationship of the individual and his or her world. The existential man or woman is *more* than simply natural man or natural woman. In the truest sense, the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from persons. Each individual and his or her world are said to coconstitute one another. In traditional psychology, people and their environments are seen, in effect, as two separate and distinct things or poles. This traditional conception is rejected by the existential-phenomenologist, in favour of the previous mentioned unity.

Thompson *et al* (1989, p. 135) refer to this as a "contextualist world view." According to Valle and King (1978b, p. 8) the notion of "dialogical relationship" underpins the notion of 'co-constitutionality'. They explain that a person and his/her micro-environment always engage in a moment-to-moment dialogue with each other. This involves the person taking-in/registering aspects of what the world has to offer, and also involves the person acting purposefully towards the world i.e., engaging with, and/or putting something out into, the world. Moss (1978, p. 86) writes:

> Perception and action are usually studied in isolation from one another. Yet, both neurologically and at the level of human action in lived-space, we discover that they are intertwined. To be underway in some action is to organize our perception towards some object, and inversely, to perceive a situation in the world is to be invited into active involvement in that situation. With every step forward, our view of the situation is adjusted; with every adjustment in our view, we are invited to step forward anew. Merleau-Ponty has called this

> continuous interplay between man and his world a *dialectic.* In this dialectic between man and his world it is difficult to distinguish strictly between perception and action […].

I now see this issue, of 'dialogical relationship', as the source of an ambiguity that I discerned during my review of the literature. This pertained to whether we view, say, an artist-at-work, as primarily engaged in an act of consuming, an act of producing, or both. If we view perception and action as mutually implicated in the *dialogue* between an artist, his/her painting accoutrements, and his/her studio, then we accept perception and action as functionally inseparable. Schelling (1984, pp. 343-344) posits an expanded definition of consuming:

> We consume with our mouths and noses and ears and eyes and proprioceptors and skin and fingertips, and with the nerves that react to external stimuli and internal hormones; we consume relief from pain and fatigue, itching and thirst. But we also consume by thinking.

Accordingly, the verb 'to consume' becomes somewhat interchangeable with the dictionary definition of the verb 'to perceive' i.e., to "become aware or conscious of" [*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th Edition]. When two individuals interact, within, for example, a research conversation, they coexist, for the duration of the conversation, within their shared micro-environment, and create an interdependent system.

Readers familiar with Kurt Lewin's 'field theory' will perhaps identify a parity between the notions of 'co-constitutionality' and 'field'. Lewin (1952, p. 240) wrote, "A totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent is called a *field.*" Neither Valle *et al* (1989) or Thompson *et al* (1989) employ the term 'field' in their introductory discussions regarding existential-

phenomenology. However, some Gestalt therapists use the term 'field' whilst also describing Gestalt therapy as having an existential-phenomenological orientation. For example, Yontef (1993, p. 3 of 39) writes, "The scientific world view that underlies the Gestalt phenomenological perspective is field theory." Indeed, Valle and King (1978a) include a section [pp. 295-299, written by Sol S. Rosenberg] about Frederick [Fritz] Perls (a co-founder of Gestalt therapy) in their book about existential-phenomenology. Rosenberg (p. 295) quotes Laura Perls (1976) (a co-founder of Gestalt therapy and one-time wife of Fritz Perls) as saying:

> Gestalt therapy takes its bearing from what is here and now, not from what has been or should be. It is an existential-phenomenological approach and as such it has to be experiential and experimental.

3.3.2 The Life-world

Moving on to another tenet of the existential-phenomenological orientation, Valle *et al* (1989, p. 9) write:

> The *Lebenswelt,* being given directly and immediately in human experience, is the starting point or ground for the existential-phenomenological psychologist. The life-world is the foundation upon which existential-phenomenological thought is built (no assumptions are made as to what might be behind or cause the life-world); in the truest sense, the *Lebenswelt* is the beginning.

According to Burley and Bloom (2008, p. 152), phenomenology derives from Immanuel Kant's distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena.* Kant posited *noumena* as 'things-in-themselves', the things which populate the 'objective' world. He used the term *phenomena* to designate the world as perceived by the individual. Kant asserted that human beings cannot experience *noumena* directly; they can only have knowledge of the 'objective' world via

phenomena - the content of perceived 'reality' - what Valle and King refer to (above) as a person's *Lebenwelt* or life-world.

3.3.3 Intentionality

Burley and Bloom (2008, p. 151) cite Franz Brentano [1838-1917] as the first person to conduct serious investigations into phenomenology. However, Edmund Husserl [1859-1938], one of Brentano's students, usually gets described as the founder of phenomenology. [See, for example: Greetham (2006, p. 195), Robson (2002, p. 195) and Valle and King (1978b, p. 7)] According to Hacker (2001, p. 119) Brentano, "brought afresh into the limelight" what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages had called 'intentionality'. Brentano's re-introduction of notion of 'intentionality' began the process by which it has become one of the staple tenets of present-day existential-phenomenology. Valle *et al* (1989, p. 11) write:

> […] the existential-phenomenological psychologist also points out that we are never merely conscious but are always conscious *of* something. Saying that consciousness is always a "consciousness of" means that it *always has an object* (an object, that is, that is not consciousness itself). This object may be of a concrete nature such as a chair, a tree, or another person; it could be anyone of a number of dream images, or it could be an abstract idea or concept. Consciousness is, therefore, said to be intentional in nature or to be characterized by *intentionality.* That is, when speaking of consciousness, one is either implicitly or explicitly referring to its intended object as well.

Similarly, both Anscombe (1965) and Ryle (1932) link the notion of intentionality with the grammatical relation between transitive verbs and their objects - as in 'thinking (verb) a thought (object)'. Anscombe (1965, p. 56) writes of, "intentional verbs, taking intentional objects", and Ryle (1932, p. 171) writes, "To every piece of mental functioning there is intrinsically correlative something

which is the accusative of that functioning […] all consciousness is 'intentional or 'transitive'".

I have recently [2013] encountered the adverbial theory, which brings into question the taken-for-granted use of transitive verbs of mental conduct and their direct objects. As Pendlebury (1998, p. 101) puts it:

> The core of the [adverbial] theory, consists […] in the denial of objects of experience (as apposed to objects of perception) coupled with the view that the role of the grammatical object in a statement of experience is to characterise more fully the sort of experience that is attributed to the subject by saying something about the contents of that experience. The claim, then, is that the grammatical object functions as a modifier, and, in particular, a modifier of a verb.

According to Bestor (1979, p. 233) Gilbert Ryle suggests that, in place of mental phenomena, such as 'abstract ideas', 'consciousness', and 'images', we can speak in terms of different modes/types of mental conduct . Bestor (1979, 236) quotes Ryle as saying:

> Don't look for things *named* by the bits and pieces of our mental talk (covert things). Think of that talk as *qualifying* the doings and undergoings of people (doings and undergoings both overt and covert).

So, instead of, for example, 'having a daydream', adverbially one 'imagines daydreamingly'. The noun 'daydream' gets adverbialised, such that the adverb 'daydreamingly' qualifies the verb 'imagines'. Thus we have modes-of-mental-conduct rather than mental verbs acting on mental objects. This philosophical move fundamentally challenges an aspect of the ontology of 'intentionality' and 'transitivity', by postulating an objectless mental/phenomenological landscape. In terms of my own research, adverbial theory gives me

pause when discussing the commonplace view that we may 'consume' our own 'thoughts' and 'feelings'. Adverbialised, 'consuming one's own thoughts' becomes 'thinking self-watchingly'. One doesn't have a 'thought' separate from the thinking/consumption thereof - one has an adverbially-modified mode of thinking/consuming. But a mode of psychological consuming without an 'object' becomes 'foodless' consuming. Without figurative/mental 'food' the psychological-consumption metaphor breaks down. I revisit this topic in chapter 13.

3.3.4 Figure/Ground

Thompson *et al* (1989, p. 136) position 'intentionality' as an "attendant concept" in relation to the notion of figure/ground; they explain the figure/ground metaphor thus, "A particular setting can afford different experiences as certain aspects of the context stand out while others recede and become background […]" For example, an individual faced with a vista, actively 'takes-in' the scene according to the selectivity and mobility of his/her sensory-attending. The aspects of the scene which become 'figural' [stand out], for the individual, co-exist with the aspects of the vista that simultaneously become 'ground' [contextual background] to the 'figure'. Thus the 'figure' and the 'ground' mutually, and inseparably, co-constitute each other. Perls (1973, pp. 2 and 8) writes:

> The choice of which element will stand out is made as a result of many factors, all of which can be lumped together under the general term *interest*. […] Formulating this principle in terms of Gestalt psychology, we can say that the dominant need of the organism, at any time, becomes the foreground figure […]. The foreground is that need which presses most sharply for satisfaction, whether the need is […] physiological or psychological.

Thus, that which seems most pressing, salient, or 'appropriate', from moment to moment, serves to highlight whatever, in our experiencing, needs attending to.

Since human perception always takes place within particular contexts, and since consciousness, according to an intentionalist account, always explicitly or implicitly focuses on some 'thing' beyond the act of consciousness itself, then we cannot insist that emergent experiencing derives solely from human subjectivity. The intentionality of perception implicitly posits a world beyond consciousness - whilst awake, we remain 'conscious-of-some-thing'. We can not, so far as I know, simply have an awareness of conscious itself. However, as mentioned in the previous section, adverbialism suggests that we undertake 'mental' acts - of, say, imagining, remembering, and thinking - 'consciously', rather than having an awareness of a 'thing' called 'consciousness'. Thus, the notion of a 'separate' consciousness gives way to multifarious mental acts undertaken consciously - self-awarely, self-monitoringly, self-watchingly. According to adverbial theory, then, doing things consciously replaces the notion of 'consciousness' per se.

3.3.5 Intentionality in Brief

Philosophically speaking, we can perhaps only hypothesise with regard to the existence of an 'objective' world, separate from human perception, since without *intentional* consciousness the world would have no witnesses. As Brownell e*t al* (2008, p. 19) note:

> The world as it is lived gets its meaning through the existence of individual consciousness that makes it present in the act of *intentionality.* Without the person, without consciousness through which the objects are revealing themselves, the world

> would not exist in any meaningful way. The world exists only as "*world-for-consciousness*" […]. Objects in the world, including other persons, exist only through the meanings we create for them, i.e. they exist as *intentional objects.* Neuroscientific research […] proves that the immediate perception, the first translation of a stimulus into an object, lasts perhaps a split second. Our brains immediately engage further, more complex schemas created in and derived from our whole experience, and they start to construct meaning. Meaning is implicit in our experience of reality. As a matter of fact, reality for a person is the process of experiencing. The subjective "I" and its intentional objects thus create an indissoluble unity characterized by mutual *intentionality.* In this sense the existence of one is dependent on the other. Through the world in consciousness the meaning of the person's existence emerges, and the world gets meaning, its existence, through consciousness which makes it present.

3.3.6 Reflection and Prereflection

There remain a clutch of related terms which need explaining before we can complete this round-up of key existential-phenomenological concepts. Valle and King (1978b p. 11) describe the distinction between *reflective* thought and a *prereflective* stage*.* We can think of *reflective* thought as the elaboration of more-basic sensory perceptions. These, more-primary, *prereflective* perceptions pre-date the elaborative, *reflective* stage of experiencing*.* Some existential-phenomenologists seek to get 'back' to the *prereflective*, unelaborated realm of perceiving the world, to the extent that they can. This process requires that the existential-phenomenologist 'brackets' (or 'puts-out-of-play') their so-called 'natural attitude' in favour of a so-called 'transcendental attitude'. The former 'natural attitude' views the self and the world as discrete entities and views the world as governed by cause-effect scientism (Valle and King 1978b, p. 12). By seeking to usurp the 'natural attitude' with an attitude informed by the foregoing (existential-phenomenological) theoretical perspective, some existential-phenomenologists seek to move towards perceiving the world, in a manner less infused with

preconceptions and habitual, patterned ways of perceiving. However, Valle and King (1978b, p. 12) acknowledge that, "This process of bracketing is one that never ends so a *complete* reduction is an impossibility." The term 'reduction', here, pertains to the process of subduing the 'natural attitude' and amplifying a, so-called, 'transcendental attitude'. In other words, reduction entails a movement 'back' towards experiencing *prereflective*, raw *phenomena*, as against elaborated, *reflective* experiencing.

Willis (2001, p. 8) distinguishes between "classical approaches to phenomenological research" and, what he calls "'new' phenomenology". He goes on to spell out the distinction:

> It is then possible to inquire about the nature of the experience and how it presented itself as a phenomenon as in classical phenomenology or to follow the alternative empathetic phenomenology by inquiring what the subject made of that experience: what was its significance.

In this regard I take my lead from Finley (2009, p. 9) who suggests employing terms such as, "phenomenologically inspired" or "phenomenologically orientated" in order to differentiate less-strictly Husserl-informed approaches from more strictly Husserlian approaches. In this regard Colaizzi (1978, p. 69) makes the powerful point that, "[…] *dialogal research uncovers presuppositions most fruitfully."* In other words, research participants acting more reflectively, may wittingly and/or unwittingly disclose their world-views, preferences, prejudices, beliefs and so on, via the details of their spontaneous verbal and non-verbal expression, as they engage in nominally 'unstructured' dialogue. Thus, everyday speaking may provide us with useful information, without our having to try to, systematically, 'get back' to a more 'essential' state of being.

3.3.7 A Non-Prescriptive Approach

Finally, King *et al* (1978, p. 273) write:

> Since existential-phenomenology is not a mechanical-type theory, each practitioner's incorporation of the theory into their own work will be somewhat different […].

Here King *et al* suggest that an existential-phenomenological approach constitutes a non-prescriptive orientation; we can expect individuals to appropriate aspects of the overall approach idiosyncratically. This gave me licence to research without feeling overly wedded to a well-worn path.

3.3.8 Concluding Section 3.3

In this section I have introduced the main tenets of the existential-phenomenological approach. In the course of discussing 'intentionality' I briefly introduced adverbial theory which postulates a radical departure from received views regarding intentionality and transitivity. I will return to the topic of adverbial theory in chapter 13 of this thesis, but, for now, I wish to make the point that I have not simply adopted the existential-phenomenological orientation wholesale. The existential-phenomenological approach enabled me to get my bearings in a sea of alternative approaches. I needed to start somewhere, to obtain a theoretical foothold. In the course of my data analysis I also appropriated aspects from a different, though complimentary, theoretical approach, namely cybernetics; I will come to this in due course.

3.4 Noticing

Hollway and Jefferson posit four core questions associated with analysing qualitative data:

- what do we notice?
- why do we notice what we notice?
- how can we interpret what we notice?
- how can we know that our interpretation is the 'right' one?

- Hollway and Jefferson (2000, p. 55)

notice ▪ v. **1** become aware of.

- *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th Edition)

It seems clear to me that a live research conversation presents participants with manifold forms of 'data', all just as susceptible to Hollway and Jefferson's questions as a written text or a piece of audio data. What, for example, do we notice as we converse with another person during a research conversation? According to my *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th Edition) the verb 'to notice' means: to "become aware of". By substituting the latter for the former in Hollway and Jefferson's opening quote we get:

- what do we become aware of?
- why do we become aware of what we become aware of?
- how can we interpret what we become aware of?
- how can we know that our interpretation of what we become aware of is the right one?

Indeed, as I will go on to argue, we could equally substitute the terms: 'consume', 'experience', 'perceive', or 'sense' for the term 'notice' in Hollway and Jefferson's quoted questions. Furthermore,

what we 'become aware of', 'consume', 'experience', 'notice', 'perceive', or 'sense', will most likely, at times, comprise of focal phenomena beyond the nominal 'data'. The preliminary quoted questions beg a couple of supplementary questions. How do we delimit (and who delimits) what we can notice? If someone asks us to concentrate on something specific, do they not ask us to alter the limits of our awareness? This, in turn, links with the existential freedom of choice, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and clearly relates to the issue of power relations. Who directs one's attention to what?

> As long as you are awake, [and sometimes even as you sleep] you are at every moment aware of something.
>
> - Perls *et al* (1951, pp. 82-83)

> […] we have to start with what is the primary given and for the person this is his own flow of experiencing.
>
> - von Eckartsberg (1972, p. 161)

> Awareness is experience -
> Experience is awareness.
>
> - Perls (1969, p. 28)

As already suggested, from an intentionalist perspective, we always notice, become aware of, or experience 'something'. This something may include phenomena outside of our body, our own overt actions, along with our 'inner' goings-on - such as thinking, imagining, and feeling. As von Eckartsberg (1972, p. 161) puts it:

> We live and act and try to make sense of it. This is the simplest understanding of existential phenomenology that I can arrive at.

According to von Eckartsberg (1978, pp. 200-201) the combination of our experiences [what we notice - what we become aware of] and what we do [our actions] constitute our 'experiactions'. Von Eckartsberg (1972, p. 166) suggests that, ideally, a fully-field-theoretically-orientated person, "would have to use an even more complex term like: 'experiaction-in-situation'". This latter term explicitly acknowledges the necessary, and impactful, involvement of an existential setting in the generation of any experiences and actions. This interdependence between constituent aspects of a field accords with Lewin's (1952, p. 239) equation $B = F(P, E)$, where a person's "behavior (*B*) is a function (*F*) of the person (*P*) and his environment (*E*)." A dyadic research conversation would thus comprise of 'inter-experiaction-in-situ' - two people experiencing and acting in relation to each other, and in relation to their shared micro-environmental context. Sensory noticing constitutes one aspect of human being; our overt actions concurrently contribute to what and how we notice. As Powers (2005, p. 41) notes, "What an organism senses affects what it does, and *what it does affects what it senses.*" [Italics in original] So, the terms: 'to notice', 'to become aware of', 'to experience', and 'to sense', all seem closely related, if not synonymous.

Rolf von Eckartsberg (2010, pp. 258-259) notes:

> I can take a walk through the park, while at the same time I think about a lecture I have to give or daydream about some adventure.

For me, much hinges on our moment-to-moment experiaction - our combined, and functionally inseparable, experiencing and acting.

To even ask, 'What do we notice?' apparently invites us to uncouple our experience from our actions; but does it? We can, and do, notice both what we do and what we think and feel - our actions as well as our affect. Laing (1967, p. 20) refers to people as, "centres of experience and origins of actions". But does this not contradict a major tenet of existential-phenomenology? Seen from a field-theoretical/contextualist perspective, micro-environment and organism constitute an interdependent whole. Doesn't the very act of instituting an 'I' divide the field into organism *and* environment, instead of thinking in terms of a unitary organism/environment field? Perls *et al* (1951), some of the early developers of Gestalt therapy, resolve this dichotomy by defining the 'self' as the 'boundary function' - the contact-boundary where organism meets environment. The, so-called, 'self' thus gains identity courtesy of the manner in which it manages (or regulates) its contact boundary. One can thus see the 'self' as the gate-keeper who tends to the boundary wall, and who oversees the issues of proximity to other phenomena, ingress, and egress [the 'traffic'] across the contact boundary. Perls *et al* (1951, p. 229) write:

> […] experience is ultimately contact, the functioning of the boundary of the organism and its environment […]. [T]he contact-boundary, where experience occurs, does not *separate* the organism and its environment; rather it limits the organism, contains and protects it, and *at the same time* it touches the environment.

Perls *et al*, then, define the contact-boundary as the zone at which the business between organism and environment gets transacted, with attendant/concomitant 'experiencing' hosted by the implicated (conscious) organism.

The questions: 'What do I notice?' or, 'What do I become aware of?' or, 'What do I experience?' [Or - non-dualistically - 'What does my

momentary 'experiaction-in-situ' comprise of?'] all seem key questions which one might, implicitly or explicitly, ask oneself at any juncture. These questions would, minimally, aid the questioning individual in becoming more consciously aware of his/her own moment-to-moment goings-on. Although some situations, such as automated routines, like getting cash from an ATM, may not require one to become deeply invested in one's concomitant inner goings-on, in other contexts, such as conversations, one may benefit from a developed level of awareness, such that one can remain abreast of potentially significant momentary developments and changes in conversational tone and direction. Our (implicit or explicit) answers to these questions [namely, What do I notice? Why do I notice what I notice? etc.,] inform our ongoing behaviour. The term 'data analysis' constitutes just one of many such named activities, like: 'data collection', 'movie-viewing', and 'reading'. Barker and Wright (1954, p. 235) call such terms "episodes", "a name for a commonly recognized or recognizable unit of action with its context." They suggest that asking an observed person the question, "What are you doing?" (p. 258), would generally furnish an observer with an appropriate title for a particular episode. They nonetheless recognise the issue of, "concurrence of episodes" what they call "*overlapping*" (p. 226). However, to ask, 'What do you notice about the data?' or, 'What did you notice about the movie?' presupposes the direction of the focal attention of the questioned individual. In contrast, to ask a person, 'What do you notice AS you read the data?' or, 'What do you notice WHILST watching the film?' frames the enquiry in a somewhat more open-textured manner, leaving the respondent 'wriggle room'. To ask the question, 'What do you think OF the movie?' asks for movie-specific noticings. And, whilst we can, and do, provide some sort of an answer to such questions, to answer requires us to come up with question-relevant noticings.

3.4.1 Concluding Section 3.4

How would I encapsulate what I've written in this section?

- Noticing, or becoming aware of something-or-other, may occur during sleeping as well as waking states.

- During a 'live' research conversation, the question, 'What do I notice now?' constitutes the, usually implicit, question that informs all that occurs therein. Even if one chooses to withhold (rather than express) what one notices, the fact of our having noticed (something or other) remains true as an aspect of our subjective experience.

- I can't escape the conviction that, as a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed researcher, my full-blown-experiaction-in-situ, whilst involved in 'research', constitutes my 'process' of study - my data.

- Each research-related moment furnishes me with the opportunity to ask, implicitly or overtly, 'What do I notice now?' I may notice any aspect of the-'field'-I-co-constitute, and what I notice, along with whatever I 'do', comprises 'reality' from my perspective. You will note that the distinction between 'observer' and 'observed' dissolves when we 'self-observe'.

- My research initiative had to do with exploring the implications of applying a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed, orientation to the overall research process. I wanted to explore ways of

> reconceptualising what some consumer researchers think of as 'consumption experiences'.

In words that echo my own sentiments Perls (1969, p. 69) wrote:

> I have made awareness the hub of my approach, recognizing that phenomenology is the primary and indispensible step towards knowing all there is to know.

3.5 Walking-Through the Research Method

3.5.1 The Research Conversations

I undertook the 'data collection' aspect of my research using an in-depth conversational approach. This involved each volunteer and me, initially, watching a short [18-minute] movie, screened at the beginning of each conversation. I conceptualised the screening of the movie as a way of segueing, more softly, into the research conversation proper. I did not screen the movie with a view to soliciting people's responses to it as a focal product. The film thus provided a shared point of reference which both participants in a conversation could, if they wished, refer to during the subsequent conversation. The conversation, per se, had no pre-planned focal topic; each conversation thus developed somewhat ideosycratically. I video-recorded each conversation, since the field-theoretical perspective, which I adopted, potentially took account of any aspect(s) of the research context and the interaction therein.

3.5.2 A Two-Stage Approach

3.5.2.1 Stage One

The research comprised of a two-stage process. Individual conversations, in both stages of the research, lasted for between around 1½ hours and 2 hours. This timescale excluded the

screening the 18-minute-long movie prior to the start of the conversation proper. [*My New New York Diary* [sic] (2010), by Michel Gondry and Julie Doucet. The film takes the form of a fusion of cartoon-style 'graphic-novel' and 'live action', documenting the very processes by which the film, itself, got made i.e., the collaboration/meeting of two artists - graphic-novelist and filmmaker.] The first (method-development) stage, of the research, entailed me conducting three research conversations, each followed by a (much shorter) interview with each volunteer, conducted by one of my supervisors. This enabled my supervisors to closely monitor volunteers' reactions to taking part in the video-recorded research conversations, by providing volunteers with an opportunity to reflect on their research-conversation experiences outside of the research context. The volunteers may have had concerns which they felt unable to express whilst taking part in the research conversations themselves. Research volunteers thus had a chance, for example, to withdraw consent regarding the video-recorded material, without having to confront me as the researcher. My supervisors and I could also benefit from volunteers' feedback, thus indentifying any strengths and weaknesses which the volunteers detected in relation to the approach.

3.5.2.2 Stage Two

The second (theory-development) stage, of the research, entailed me conversing with a further seven adult male and female volunteers, of different ages. As with the stage one conversations, these remained relatively unstructured, in the sense that I did not employ prefabricated questions. And as with stage one conversations, I conducted stage two conversations in a manner informed by field-theoretical, Gestalt principles. In practical terms this entailed the following.

3.6 The Informing Gestalt Principles

3.6.1 Here and Now

I sought to hold and encourage a firm focus on the here-and-now, moment-to-moment experience and behaviour of both participants in a research conversation. Holbrook (1995, p. 11) writes: "Kotler and Levy [1969a] opened possibilities for studying hitherto neglected kinds of products […] including music, visual art, movies, and television." Informed by field-theory, I looked upon the movie, screened prior to the research conversation, as simply one product amongst a potpourri of other 'products' - broadly construed. The research setting thus constituted a kind of buffet - including: people, sounds, multifarious artefacts, vistas-out-of-windows, and the like. I did not approach the screening of the movie from the perspective of a market researcher. I did not routinely ask volunteers to share their movie-specific noticiings, although some volunteers spontaneously shared some of their movie-related observations. The interactive mode of conversing meant that, I too, selectively shared my own present-tense experiencing throughout each conversation. Perls (1947, p. 208) encouraged this orientation:

> Throughout the theoretical part of this book I have been laying the utmost stress on this sense of actuality - on the importance of realizing that there is no other reality than the present.

3.6.2 Figure/Ground

Remaining mindful of the figure/ground dynamic involved honouring salient aspects of one's own, and the other's, experiencing and behaviour i.e., whatever became 'figural' or 'stood-out' moment-to-moment during the conversations. As Perls (1973, p. 2) put it:

> The choice of which element will stand out is made as a result of many factors, all of which can be lumped together under the general term *interest.*

3.6.3 Potentially 'Field'-Wide Level of Focus

I encouraged participants to focus on both 'inner' and 'outer' phenomena within the conversation 'field', this in accord with Perls' (1969, p. 69) statement:

> I have made awareness the hub of my approach, recognizing that phenomenology is the primary and indispensible step towards knowing all there is to know.

3.6.4 Gestalt Interrelatedness

I remained mindful that a person's combined physical/behavioural/experiential goings-on form a gestalt - an indivisible whole. Thus, everything a person expresses (verbally and non-verbally) forms an integral constituent part of that person's ongoing process of being. As Perls (1973, p. 187) put it:

> A gestalt is an irreducible phenomenon. It is an essence that is there that disappears if the whole is broken up into its components.

And (Perls 1973, p. 187), "Keep your eyes and ears open. Every clue is to be accepted."

3.6.5 Volunteers Free to Withhold

The approach to research, that I adopted, required from volunteers (and indeed from me) a willingness to share, by degree, what they observed and experienced from moment-to-moment. This did not, however, preclude the exercise of choice and discretion on the part of participating individuals. I worked on the foundational premise that human beings selectively represent their experiencing, and that this constitutes an interesting, and indicative, phenomenon in itself.

3.6.6 Concluding Section 3.6

The approach that I took to the research conversations focused, primarily, on both participants' inter-experiacting-in-situ; any aspect of a conversation-context [including 'self' and 'other'] could get 'taken-in' or registered, from moment-to-moment. The choice of what, exactly, got 'taken in' depended on the selective attention and selective expression of each participant. What each person, ostensibly, attended to, became evident through what s/he chose to share, verbally, with the other participant. Ellis *et al* (1997, p. 121) wrote about this form of interacting:

> [W]e view interviewing as a collaborative communication process occurring between researchers and respondents, although we do not focus on validity and bias. […] In this process, the distinction between "researcher" and "subject" gets blurred.

3.7 Video Recording

My deciding to video-record the research conversations seemed unequivocally warranted by my adoption of a field-theoretical orientation which rendered any aspect of the research-conversation-context a potential 'object of consumption' for participants. This, potentially, included any visual, verbal/aural, and behavioural phenomena occurring during a research conversation. The video-recording of research conversations served the following three purposes:

1) It facilitated post-conversation data-analysis. A participant researcher has finite (and selective) powers of attention and may miss details, during a research

conversation, which s/he may register on subsequent viewing(s) of the recording.

2) It provided some 'insurance', in that each of the conversations occurred 'on the record', and thus, evidence exists of what went on during the conversations. The video-recording of conversations also supported the development of the research method, itself, by facilitating 'research-conversation-post-mortems'.

3) Importantly, video-recording captured non-verbal [and micro-environmental details], as well as the verbal expression of both the researcher and the volunteer as they interacted. The nature of the 'data analysis' depended, initially, on my own 'noticings' as I watched the audio-visual recordings - as described in the next chapter.

The Ethics Approval Committee agreed with my reasoning and accepted my application for ethics approval without amendments.

3.8 Sample

Robson (2002, pp. 265-266) refers to my mode of recruiting research volunteers as 'purposive sampling' and writes, "A sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy her specific needs in a project." I asked two volunteers to each direct an associate of theirs to me as a potential research volunteer. This constituted the first stage of a process that Robson (Ibid.,) calls 'snowball sampling' - one contact leading to others - although the term 'snowballing' overstates the case in relation to small-scale research such as mine.

I needed to recruit volunteers able to demonstrate an ongoing awareness of self and their immediate environment. They also needed to display a readiness, and the vocabulary, to articulate their moment-to-moment experiencing. However, this latter requirement needed qualifying by the fact that a field-theoretical, perspective also takes account of what people express non-verbally. Thus individuals may involuntarily 'express' themselves via non-verbal means - such as facial expressions and body posture.

I discovered, through informal conversations, prior to embarking on the research conversations per se, that some people had an appetite for the mode of interaction that I had proposed, whilst others did not. I therefore, necessarily, enlisted the help of those individuals who found the prospect of my research-agenda enticing. Gould (1995, p. 720) makes the point that some people have, "a talent and a passion" for introspective methods. It seemed clear that some individuals would feel more comfortable with (and adept at) my proposed mode of enquiry, than other individuals. Hirschman and Holbrook (1986, p. 242) also support this view:

> Although it violates the democratic norms of logical empiricism to state that the conduct of introspective inquiry requires a certain *intrinsic nature* on the part of the investigator, this does appear to be the case.

The conversational approach that I employed entailed a certain blurring of the roles usually assigned to an 'interviewer' and an 'interviewee'. I left potential volunteers in no doubt that I viewed them as collaborators in an inquiry that focused on *both* participants' observations, behaviours, and experiences within a 'conversation' and not an 'interview'. [See Fig. 3.1 and Fig. 3.2 at the end of this chapter] I 'pitched' my research agenda, and then allowed forces of attraction and aversion (within prospective

volunteers) to find a level. I vetted potential volunteers according to my own overt and covert criteria, e.g., Do I want to work with this person? This criterion did not apply in the case of 'Ruby' [conversation No. 3]; a prior volunteer had recommended her, and thus I had not met her prior to the day of our research conversation. Platt (1981, pp. 77-78) writes, "I also left out of my sample altogether a few potential respondents of whom I was frightened on grounds of personality and/or status […]".

I invited ten people, in all, to participate in my project, enabling me to pick my sample from people I had already met, or who, as in the cases of Ruby and Sufia [not their real names], got introduced to me by other participating associates of theirs. I approached people who had already shown themselves as willing to share their experiences, in informal settings, and with whom I felt a working level of rapport.

Although the mode of communication that I encouraged, within the research conversations, would not have appealed to everyone, it seemed inappropriate, to me, to modify my approach to research on the strength of resistance from some individuals. Far better, I thought, to find a receptive 'audience' for my research initiative. In this, somewhat-exploratory, small-scale, approach I did not seek statistical validity. I needed the help of individuals prepared to take part in an emergent process, enabling us to see what happened when I began to apply field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed, ideas in moment-to-moment human interaction.

For the first (research-method-development) stage of the research I recruited fellow researchers/academics - people able to help me to fine-tune the conversational approach to research, by giving my supervisors and me a more 'technical' level of feedback concerning

the mechanics of the approach. A lay person may not have had the experience, or vocabulary, to discuss the finer points of research technique. Furthermore, I figured that colleagues of mine would find it more convenient to attend the proposed follow-up interviews with my supervisors. In the event Neil [conversation No. 2] came from outside of the University. In relation to the [stage two] 'theory-development-stage' of the research, I invited people, such as, for example, three former clients from my days as a professional hairdresser. I had already established a high degree of mutual trust with such people. They already had a measure of what they might expect from me, and what motivated me. Thus I felt happy to allow one such person to recommend a 'suitable' person, to me, as a participant. I found the number of volunteers manageable in relation to my mode of data analysis.

3.9 Ethical Issues

Two aspects of my research agenda required particular ethical consideration: (a) my modus operandi before, within, and after the research conversations, and (b) my plan to video-record the research conversations.

Since I had no covert agenda, I could share, with potential volunteers, my intentions and the envisaged style of the conversations. If contra-indications emerged within a prospective volunteer, and/or myself, [before, during, or after a planned research conversation] then we had agreed not to pursue the conversation. The Information-Sheet/Consent-Form, given to each prospective volunteer, [See Figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 at the end of this chapter] communicated this point and provided him/her with my contact details. Clearly, the research agenda required the willingness of both parties to take part. The fact that I worked with

people with whom I had already had some degree of contact [or people recommended to me by such people] meant that I had less confidence-gaining work to do at the outset.

By viewing participants as 'conversationalists', rather than as 'interviewees', I encouraged interactive exchanges, in which the experience and expressive output of *both* interactants [theirs and mine] potentially got taken into account.

If, as a researcher, I felt clear about my overarching purposes and theoretical orientation, and if I proceeded with due care, adequate supervision, and sensitivity, and if, in addition, I video-recorded the research events, enabling future scrutiny, then I had gone a long way towards minimising [whilst not completely eradicating] the potential for harming or upsetting volunteers and/or myself as a researcher. As already stated, after each of the three 'stage one' research conversations, each volunteers met with one of my supervisors. Volunteers thus had the chance to raise any issues/concerns before, during, and/or subsequent to the research encounters.

The Consent Form [See Fig. 3.3 at the end of this chapter] helped me to manage the issue of 'permissions' regarding the use of the video-recorded material. In the first instance I recorded, and stored, each conversation on the hard-drive of my (purpose-bought) camcorder. Following each conversation, I made a DVD back-up copy of the recording for the purpose of data-analysis. I also made a copy for each volunteer who wanted one. Three of the ten volunteers chose not to receive a DVD copy of the conversation that they had participated in. As stated, the Consent Form allowed each volunteer to stipulate how I may use my DVD recording of a conversation. The form also required each volunteer to undertake

not to copy and/or broadcast their personal DVD copy via any means. The DVDs in my possession will remain available for research-auditing purposes. Upon completing my PhD, [circa January 2014] I have undertaken to permanently delete any research-conversation-footage remaining on my camcorder's hard-drive.

I keep my camcorder and my back-up DVDs at home - a double-locked second-floor apartment, inaccessible from the outside of the building. I needed ongoing access to the discs, since I work primarily at home, and needed the flexibility to consult the discs as required. The DVDs have no markings which identify the volunteers depicted therein. Furthermore, the transcripts made from the recordings do not contain any information which would identify the featured volunteers.

3.10 Concluding

Existential-phenomenology provided me with a foundational footing as I began my project. In particular, I embraced a field-theoretical orientation. Thus instead of conceptualising the research context as populated by predetermined focal objects, I heeded the dynamic attentiveness of participants (including myself) as the determinant of salient-to-participant(s)-phenomena during research conversations. In my data chapters I address the idea that prevailing 'frames of reference' may inform what research participants feel it 'appropriate' to attend to and to express in a research context. Thus I do not wish to imply, at this early stage, that people exercise unbridled freedom in their actions and inner goings-on.

11 Apr. 11

For Your Information

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project that I am conducting, as part of my PhD, within the Marketing Group, at the University of Bradford's School of Management. I have approached you because I believe that you may be interested in participating in this project.

In practical terms, I would like to have a conversation with you based, initially, on what we noticed and experienced whilst viewing a short [18 minute] movie, screened at the beginning of the interview. How our conversation develops will depend on what we individually 'pick-up-on', and choose to share, as our interaction progresses. I expect that our post-movie conversation will last for about an hour. I would then like to take a few minutes to discuss any matters arising from our exchange.

I will explain the research approach to you in more detail at the beginning of our conversation. Your participation is entirely voluntary, so if you find that this approach is not to your taste, either before the conversation begins or as it progresses, you may withdraw from the research and all data collected, up to that point, will be permanently deleted.

At some point, soon after the interview, you will be asked to meet with one (or both) of my supervisors, to discuss your experience of taking part in the research interview. This meeting will take no more than 30 minutes.

Since my research approach takes account of all aspects of our interaction, (including speech, appearances, and the room in which we meet) I would like to video-record us as we talk. I will gladly give you a DVD copy of our conversation, for your personal use. I will store the original recording securely, and will use it only in ways that you agree to. [See attached Consent Form]

I will invite you to attend Bradford University School of Management to take part in the research. I will gladly pay any travel expenses you incur. You can contact me at: m.woodward1@bradford.ac.uk and on: 01274 [redacted] if you have any questions, comments, or concerns before or after taking part in the research.

Thank you for your time.

Michael Woodward (Doctoral Researcher)

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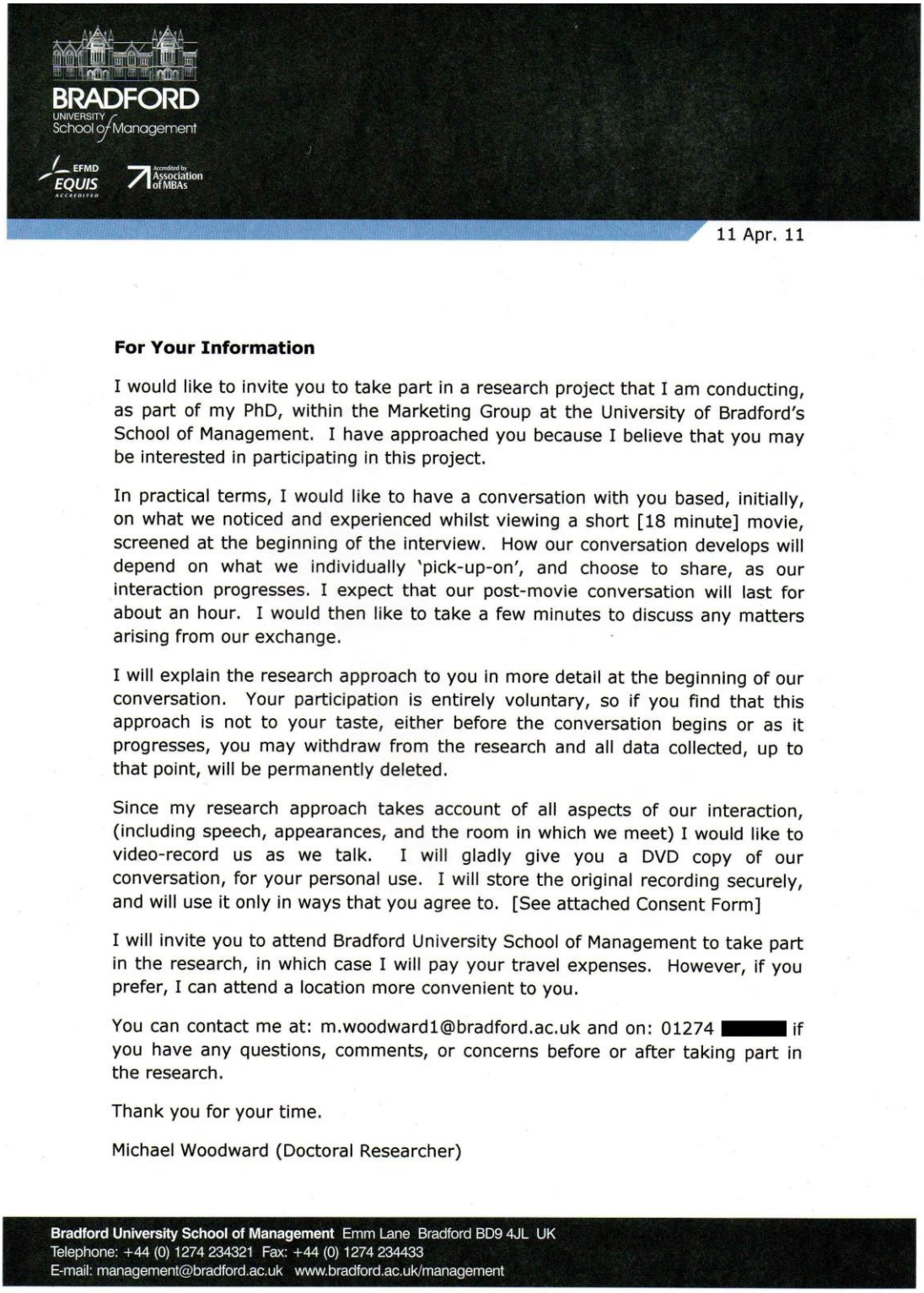
E-mail: management@bradford.ac.uk www.bradford.ac.uk/management

Figure 3.1 Stage One Information Sheet



BRADFORD
UNIVERSITY
School of Management

EFMD EQUIS ACCREDITED

Accredited by Association of MBAs

11 Apr. 11

For Your Information

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project that I am conducting, as part of my PhD, within the Marketing Group at the University of Bradford's School of Management. I have approached you because I believe that you may be interested in participating in this project.

In practical terms, I would like to have a conversation with you based, initially, on what we noticed and experienced whilst viewing a short [18 minute] movie, screened at the beginning of the interview. How our conversation develops will depend on what we individually 'pick-up-on', and choose to share, as our interaction progresses. I expect that our post-movie conversation will last for about an hour. I would then like to take a few minutes to discuss any matters arising from our exchange.

I will explain the research approach to you in more detail at the beginning of our conversation. Your participation is entirely voluntary, so if you find that this approach is not to your taste, either before the conversation begins or as it progresses, you may withdraw from the research and all data collected, up to that point, will be permanently deleted.

Since my research approach takes account of all aspects of our interaction, (including speech, appearances, and the room in which we meet) I would like to video-record us as we talk. I will gladly give you a DVD copy of our conversation, for your personal use. I will store the original recording securely, and will use it only in ways that you agree to. [See attached Consent Form]

I will invite you to attend Bradford University School of Management to take part in the research, in which case I will pay your travel expenses. However, if you prefer, I can attend a location more convenient to you.

You can contact me at: m.woodward1@bradford.ac.uk and on: 01274 [redacted] if you have any questions, comments, or concerns before or after taking part in the research.

Thank you for your time.

Michael Woodward (Doctoral Researcher)

Bradford University School of Management Emm Lane Bradford BD9 4JL UK
Telephone: +44 (0) 1274 234321 Fax: +44 (0) 1274 234433
E-mail: management@bradford.ac.uk www.bradford.ac.uk/management

Figure 3.2 Stage Two Information Sheet

Figure 3.3 Consent Form

The following form is based on a form developed by Susan M. Ervin-Tripp, Psychology Department, University of California at Berkeley.

Researcher's name: Michael N. Woodward

LETTER OF CONSENT

PHOTOGRAPHIC, AUDIO, AND/OR VIDEO RECORDS RELEASE CONSENT FORM

As part of this project I have made a photographic, audio, and/or video recording of you while you participated in the research.

I would like you to indicate below what uses of these records you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. I will only use the records in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records, names will not be identified.

1. The records can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

2. The records can be used for Journal publications.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

3. The written transcript can be kept in an archive for other researchers.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

4. The records can be used by other researchers.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

5. The records can be shown at meetings of researchers interested in the study of marketing and consuming.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

6. The records can be shown in classrooms to students.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

7. The records can be shown in public presentations to non-academic groups.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

8. The records can be used on television and radio.

Photo _____ Audio _____ Video _____

[Please use initials]

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the records as indicated above. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time (e.g., after viewing the DVD recording of the interview I took part in) by simply contacting the researcher. [See below for contact details]

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Occupation: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

• The DVD copy of the conversation, given to me, is for my personal/domestic use. I will not broadcast or copy it via any means. I accept _____ [Please use initials]

• Please send me a summary of the research findings. Yes/No [circle as required]

When not assessing the data, I will store the DVD and camcorder safely under lock and key. Like you, I will retain a DVD copy of the interview-recording and will use it only in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed to via this form. Any data remaining on my camcorder's hard-drive will be deleted upon completion of my PhD.

Michael Woodward (Doctoral Researcher)
Bradford University School of Management
Emm Lane
Bradford
BD9 4JL
Telephone: 01274 [redacted] Email: m.woodward1@bradford.ac.uk

Chapter 4: Data Analysis Walk-Through

> I write down whatever occurs to me about what I see on the screen. And that text appears in the left-hand column of my database. These are the *emotional* responses: How does the shot make me feel when I see it for the first time? Are there any associations? If, say, the image of a banana occurs to me for some reason, I write "banana," even if I have no idea why. Maybe later I'll find out the reason - but at the moment I don't question any of these things. I try to remain completely open to whatever is going through my mind. […]
>
> Later, when I'm getting ready to put the scene together, I take a second series of notes; these are less emotional and more surgical, and appear in the centre column of the database. I'm no longer the lover beholding the beloved, I'm the surgeon looking at the patient, analysing her joints and ligaments, writing down the exact footage number at each comment.
>
> - Walter Murch (Ondaatje 2002, pp. 44, 45)

> Sometimes, though, you'll have to write during a screening. Here you shouldn't aim for perfect penmanship, since you're the only person who'll have to decipher your scratches. Try writing without dropping your eyes from the screen; you'll be surprised how legible the results can be.
>
> - David Bordwell (2004, p. 12)

Together these two quotes served to inspire me as I developed the method of data reduction outlined in this chapter.[2] You will note that Murch focuses, initially, on his own 'inner' goings-on as he watches the film footage. This accords with the sentiments of Wenders (1991, p. vii) who wrote:

> I was watching movies, but as much as I was looking at the screen, I was also aware of myself as the observer. Writing was as much self-observation as film-observation […].

[2] I view data-reducing processes as any - including those operating during perception and communication - which reduce 'too-much-information' to manageable proportions.

A field-theoretical orientation, though, leads me to cast my net even more broadly than Murch and Wenders. I think of the scope of a field-theoretical orientation as potentially including any aspect(s) of the momentary 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'. Burgin (2004, pp. 7-8) cites Roland Barthes who:

> […] at the cinema found himself most fascinated by 'the theatre itself, the darkness, the obscure mass of other bodies, the rays of light, the entrance, the exit'.

Thus, like Murch and Wenders, I may notice 'inner-self-wise', but, unlike Murch and Wenders, I may also, like Barthes, notice and document contextual phenomena 'outside' (or beyond) the movie-screen - what we might, ordinarily, think of as 'distractions' or 'incidentals'.

When I put it to Morris Holbrook (Woodward and Holbrook 2013, p. 325) that, "Given the dynamic nature of our attentiveness, we may oscillate between different 'objects-of-consumption' from moment to moment", he replied, "That's right. We are multi-tasking all the time." My research project already had a field-theoretical orientation, which, in line with Emmison (2004, pp. 256-261), encompassed 'two-dimensional data' (like newspapers and photographs), 'three-dimensional data' (such as motor cars and monuments), and 'lived visual data' (including places and settings). Emmison specifies what he means by 'lived visual data':

> […] such matters as the observable movements of people in time and space, […] [an] interest in behaviour in public places, […] [and] how conduct is inextricably embedded in the immediate ecology and the material realities at hand.

When taken seriously, the notion that a person's momentary 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' constitutes his/her dynamic data pool, leads to the notion that a person's mobile attentiveness determines what, exactly, becomes fore-grounded in his/her consciousness at a point in space-time. In Table 4.1, I have enumerated some of the more obvious forms of 'data' that I encountered whilst researching. To this list I need to add, as noted earlier, my inner goings-on and the contextual 'data' that co-constituted the fields in which the types of data enumerated resided - any of which may have momentarily competed for my interest.

Table 4.1

Just Some of the Many Types of Data Occurring in My Study	
$Data_1$	The 18-minute movie, viewed in the research setting, prior to each video-recorded research conversation
$Data_2$	The 'live' research conversation itself, conducted at the School of Management
$Data_3$	The DVD recording of each research conversation
$Data_4$	The notes made whilst viewing each DVD recording, of each research conversation, in a domestic setting
$Data_5$	The meta-notes made whilst reading the-notes-made-whilst-watching-each-DVD-recording
$Data_6$	The two passes I made of each recording - each pass comprising of notes and meta-notes [I call one complete pass a viewing-log]
$Data_7$	The notes made whilst (consecutively) reading the viewing-logs pertaining to the first three research conversations [culminating in the first composite viewing-log, and drawn from six passes in all]
$Data_8$	The notes made whilst (consecutively) reading the viewing-logs pertaining to the second three research conversations [culminating in the second composite viewing-log, and, again, drawn from six passes in all]
$Data_9$	The notes made whilst (consecutively) reading the viewing-logs pertaining to the final four research conversations [culminating in the third composite viewing-log, this time drawn from eight passes in all]
$Data_{10}$	The notes made whilst (consecutively) reading each of the three composite viewing-logs [culminating in the production of a (34-page) uni-log]
$Data_{11}$	The noticings registered whilst reading the entire uni-log in one sitting [comprising of 'circlings', notes, and 'underlinings' etc.]
$Data_{12}$	The set of keywords, produced within an hour of reading the entire uni-log
$Data_{13}$	The uni-log colour-coded according to the emergent keyword-categories and - subsequent to further reading - informed by the cybernetic negative-feedback model
$Data_{14}$	The noticings made during successive drafts of the write-up - the emergent written text thus becoming a stimulus (amongst other stimuli) for further acts of feeling and thinking - those acts, thus informing the nature of emerging text

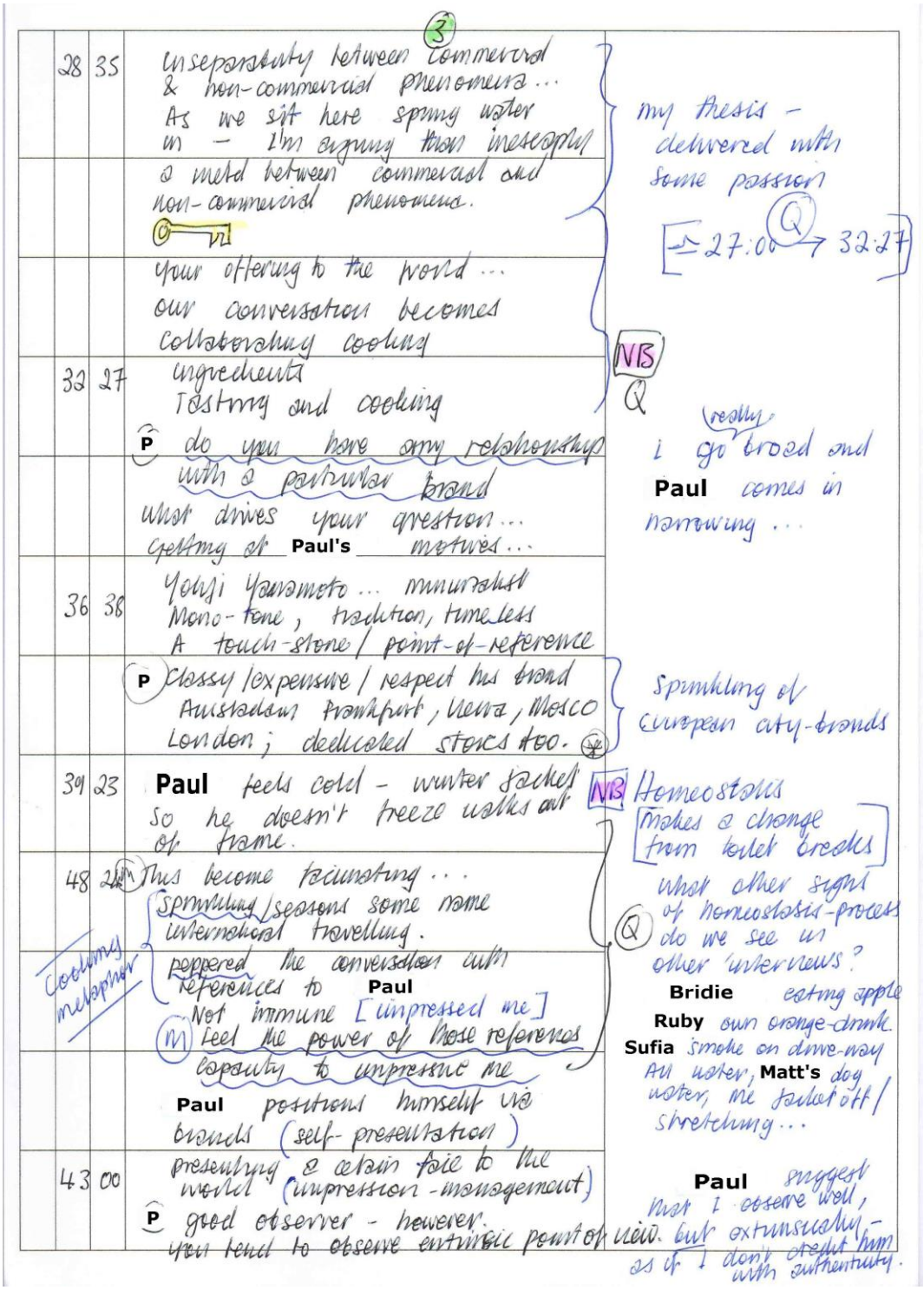


Figure 4.1 First Pass, Conversation No. 8 - Redacted Extract
Produced: 14th February 2012 (01:50 - 03:39) - Notes
16th February 2012 (00:48 - 01:40) - Meta-notes

Figure 4.1, depicts an extract from a viewing-log. Down the left-hand side you see the DVD playback-counter numerals (hours/minutes/seconds). In the central column [black ink] you can see the notes made, in real-time, whilst I watched the DVD recording of conversation No. 8. In the right-hand column [blue ink] you can see the meta-notes that I made whilst reading the original viewing-notes. I made the meta-notes two days after the original viewing session. Together the notes and the meta-notes constitute one complete pass of the audio-visual recording.

Table 4.2, [PTO] depicts the first three (stage one) research conversations. These involved each volunteer subsequently meeting with one of my supervisors, to discuss each volunteer's participation in a research conversation. Had we thus received any complaints, concerns, and/or suggestions from volunteers, at this early stage of the research, we could have modified the approach to take heed of these comments. In the event, however, we received predominantly encouraging feedback. Ruby (conversation No. 3) did, however, suggest that the in-depth approach may not have suited teenagers; she thought that they would perhaps not have had the requisite degree of self-knowledge.

As you can see [Tables 4.2 & 4.3] I conversed with six women and four men in all, ranging from 21 years old to 65 years old: two people in their 20's; two people in their 30's; three people in their 50's; and three people in their 60's.

Table 4.2

Summary of Stage-One Conversations							
No.	**Volunteer**	**Sex**	**Age**	**a) Date of Session** **b) Volunteer Met Supervisor**	**Start of Movie-Screening (18 Minutes)**	**Duration of Post-Movie-Viewing Conversation**	**Location** (TS: Titus Salt Wing of Bradford University School of Management)
1	Alia	♀	61	a) 14 Jul. 2011	13:00 (TS 0.18)	♎ 2 hrs 03 min.	TS 0.20
				b) 20 Jul. 2011 →	Professor N. Harding (a.m.) →		Prof. Harding's Office
2	Neil	♂	33	a) 25 Jul. 2011	13:00	♎ 2 hrs 07 min.	TS 0.19
				b) 25 Jul. 2011 →	Doctor G. Larsen (16:15) →		Heaton Mount (Lounge)
3	Ruby	♀	29	a) 20 Oct. 2011	13:00	♎ 1 hr 42 min.	TS 0.20
				b) 03 Nov.2011 →	Professor N. Harding (15:00) →		Prof. Harding's Office

Table 4.3

Summary of Stage-Two Conversations							
No.	**Volunteer**	**Sex**	**Age**	**Date of Session**	**Start of Movie-Screening (18 Minutes)**	**Duration of Post-Movie-Viewing Conversation**	**Location** (TS: Titus Salt Wing of Bradford University School of Management)
4	Bridie	♀	63	07 Nov. 2011	13:00	♎ 2 hrs 10 min.	TS 0.20
5	Bella	♀	65	09 Nov. 2011	13:15 (TS 0.24)	♎ 1 hr 33 min.	TS 0.25
6	Matt	♂	52	12 Nov. 2011	13:00	♎ 2 hrs 01 min.	TS 0.20
7	Sufia	♀	53	16 Nov. 2011	14:00	♎ 1 hr 40 min.	TS 0.20
8	Paul	♂	34	25 Nov. 2011	12:00	♎ 1 hr 37 min.	TS 01.05
9	Jane	♀	21	28 Nov. 2011	13:00	♎ 1 hr 52 min.	TS 01.05
10	Bob	♂	52	30 Nov. 2011	15:00	♎ 1 hr 56 min.	TS 01.05

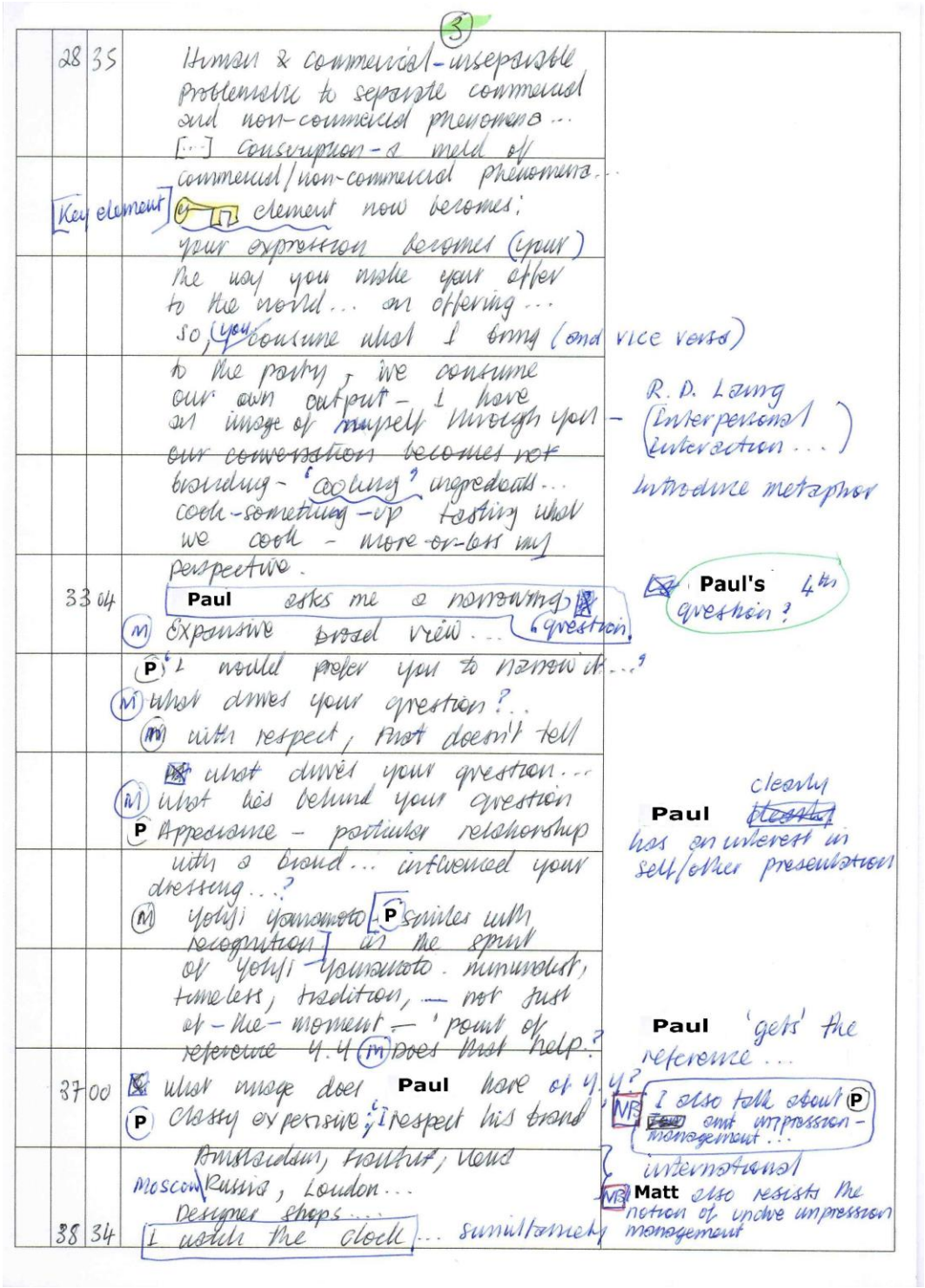


Figure 4.2 Second Pass, Conversation No. 8 - Redacted Extract

Produced: 18th February 2012 (00:23 - 02:00) - Notes
18th February 2012 (12:38 - 13:56) - Meta-notes

I made two passes of each of the ten recordings. This enabled me to notice details, in each recording, which I may have overlooked

during the first pass, or to notice extra-to-recording goings-on specific to the context in which I viewed the material a second time.

Table 4.4

The Creation of Viewing-Logs: Two for Each Conversation				
	Notes / Meta-Notes } First Pass		Notes / Meta-Notes } Second Pass	
No.	Date	Time	Date	Time
1	10 Oct. 2011	(11:46-13:50)	11 Oct. 2011	(10:55-12:57)
	10 Oct. 2011	(14:07-14:57)	11 Oct. 2011	(13:36 - N. A.)†
	24 Oct. 2011	(10:33-11:02)*	24 Oct. 2011	(11:03-11:30)
	* Meta-Meta Notes		† Not Available	
2	28 Oct. 2011	(12:50-14:58)	29 Oct. 2011	(21:12-23:19)
	29 Oct. 2011	(15:18-16:21)	30 Oct. 2011	(12:01-13:00)
3	30 Oct. 2011	(19:31-21:14)	02 Nov. 2011	(20:25-22:07)
	01 Nov. 2011	(08:50 - N. A.)	03 Nov. 2011	(09:34-10:34)
4	16 Jan. 2012	(23:24-01:34)	09 Feb. 2012	(22:53-01:03)
	17 Jan. 2012	(10:12-12:10)	10 Feb. 2012	(12:07-14:25)
5	10 Feb. 2012	(15:24-16:55)	11 Feb. 2012	(21:37-23:12)
	11 Feb. 2012	(11:59-13:08)	12 Feb. 2012	(11:39-13:27)
6	10 Feb. 2012	(23:38-01:40)	11 Feb. 2012	(23:30-01:30)
	11 Feb. 2012	(13:10-14:18)	12 Feb. 2012	(14:31-15:50)
7	13 Feb. 2012	(22:39-00:20)	17 Feb. 2012	(01:20-03:00)
	15 Feb. 2012	(23:12-00:13)	17 Feb. 2012	(21:04-22:11)
8	14 Feb. 2012	(00:32-02:10)	18 Feb. 2012	(00:23-02:00)
	16 Feb. 2012	(00:48-01:40)	18 Feb. 2012	(12:38-13:56)
9	16 Feb. 2012	(01:50-03:39)	18 Feb. 2012	(14:47-16:42)
	16 Feb. 2012	(15:20-16:25)	19 Feb. 2012	(23:29-00:50)
10	16 Feb. 2012	(22:45-00:41)	20 Feb. 2012	(01:00-02:57)
	17 Feb. 2012	(17:28-18:28)	20 Feb. 2012	(12:00-13:04)

In Table 4.4, you can see a full record of the production of my viewing-logs. You will note that I produced two sets of meta-notes in relation to conversation No. 1. I subsequently settled into producing one set of meta-notes in relation to the following nine research conversations. The time taken to create the original set of viewing-notes corresponds with the full-length of each recording, since I watched each DVD in real-time. The meta-notes tended to take less time to produce, but see conversation No. 4 for a notable exception.

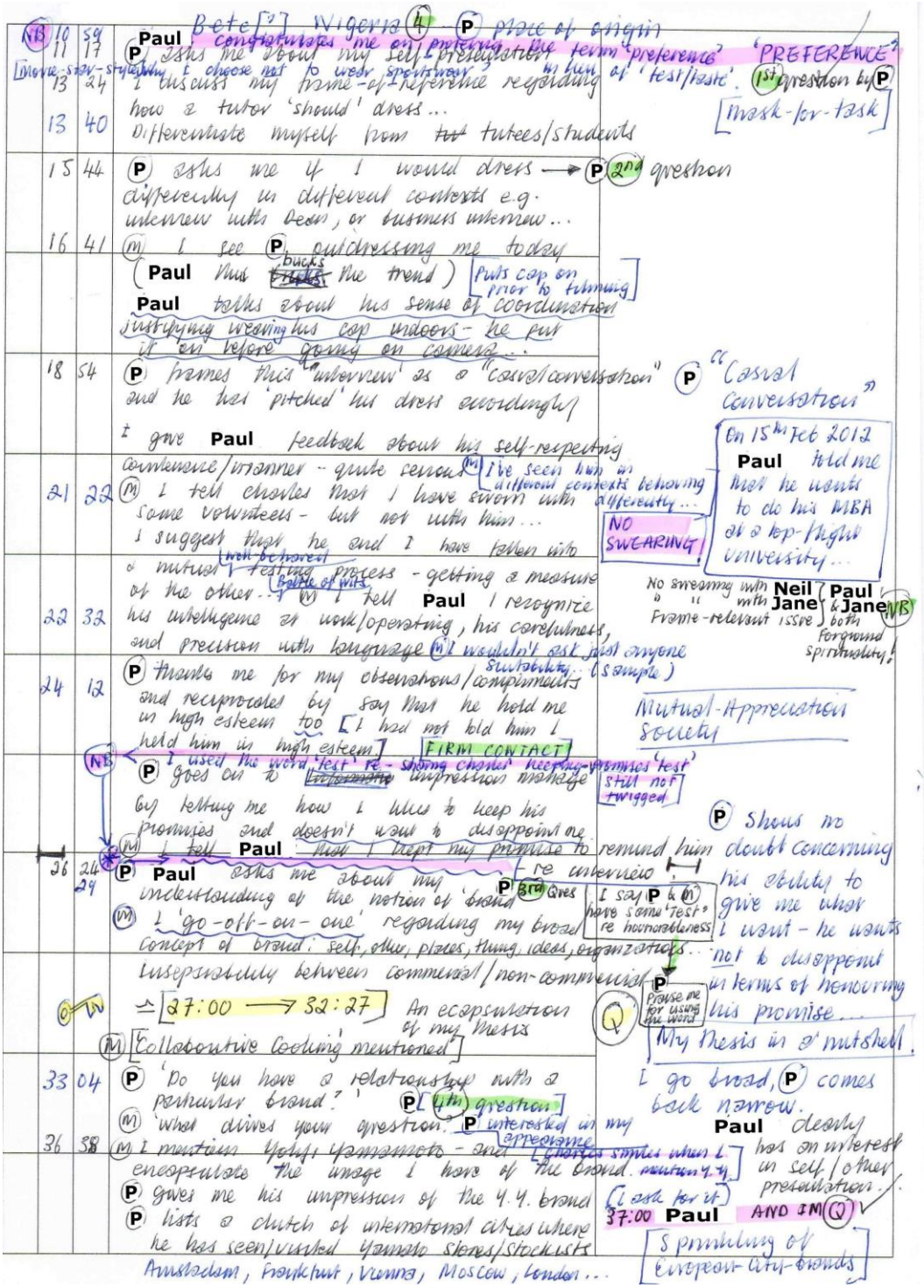


Figure 4.3 Composite Viewing-Log, Conversation No. 8 - Redacted Extract

Incorporated 1st Pass: 25th Feb. 2012 (17:08-18:25) - Notes
25th Feb. 2012 (21:45-22:56) - Meta-notes

Incorporated 2nd Pass: 25th Feb. 2012 (18:27-19:40) - Notes
25th Feb. 2012 (22:57-23:45) - Meta-notes

In Figure 4.3, [previous page] you can see that, when producing composite viewing-logs, I first included the most salient first-pass noticings from individual viewing-logs, followed by the related meta-noticings. I then interspersed the most salient second-pass noticings, then second-pass meta-noticings. By alternating between black and blue ink it became possible to visually differentiate between which noticings pertained to which pass of the recording. This method also enabled me to avoid duplicating documented noticings.

Table 4.5

The Creation of Three* Composite Viewing-Logs (Pertaining to Batches of Conversations†)					
		Composite Notes (1st Pass)		Composite Notes (2nd Pass)	
		Composite Meta-Notes (1)		Composite Meta-Notes (2)	
No.†	A*	Date	Time	Date	Time
1					
2		12 Dec. 2011	(13:00-15:00)		
		12 Dec. 2011	(15:42-18:20)		
3					
	B*				
4		12 Feb. 2012	(18:07- N. A.)	12 Feb. 2012	(19:15-20:10)
		12 Feb. 2012	(20:12-20:56)	12 Feb. 2012	(21:13-22:00)
5		12 Feb. 2012	(22:40-23:42)	12 Feb. 2012	(23:45-01:07)
		13 Feb. 2012	(01:20-02:00)	13 Feb. 2012	(02:00-02:37)
6		13 Feb. 2012	(10:16-11:26)	13 Feb. 2012	(11:28-12:25)
		13 Feb. 2012	(12:27-12:56)	13 Feb. 2012	(12:58-13:28)
	C*				
7		25 Feb. 2012	(12:18-13:27)	25 Feb. 2012	(13:29-14:16)
		25 Feb. 2012	(14:17-15:07)	25 Feb. 2012	(15:08-16:28)
8		25 Feb. 2012	(17:08-18:25)	25 Feb. 2012	(18:27-19:40)
		25 Feb. 2012	(~~21:45-22:56~~)	25 Feb. 2012	(22:57-23:45)
9		26 Feb. 2012	(11:31-12:55)	26 Feb. 2012	(12:56-14:25)
		26 Feb. 2012	(15:07-16:38)	26 Feb. 2012	(16:39-17:15)
10		26 Feb. 2012	(17:28-19:05)	26 Feb. 2012	(19:07-20:09)
		27 Feb. 2012	(00:10-00:40)	27 Feb. 2012	(00:42-01:24)

In Table 4.5, you can see that my first composite viewing-log gives only an overall timing. This had to do with me arriving at an appropriate documenting practice, through trial and error. Creating composite viewing-logs enabled me to jettison material that seemed superfluous - either in terms of the perceived triviality of a detail, or its failure to catch my interest. I knew that I had a complete paper trail, so omitting certain details, in successive layers of the data-reduction, did not equate with 'deleting' those details. I can, at any point, go back to the original viewing-logs.

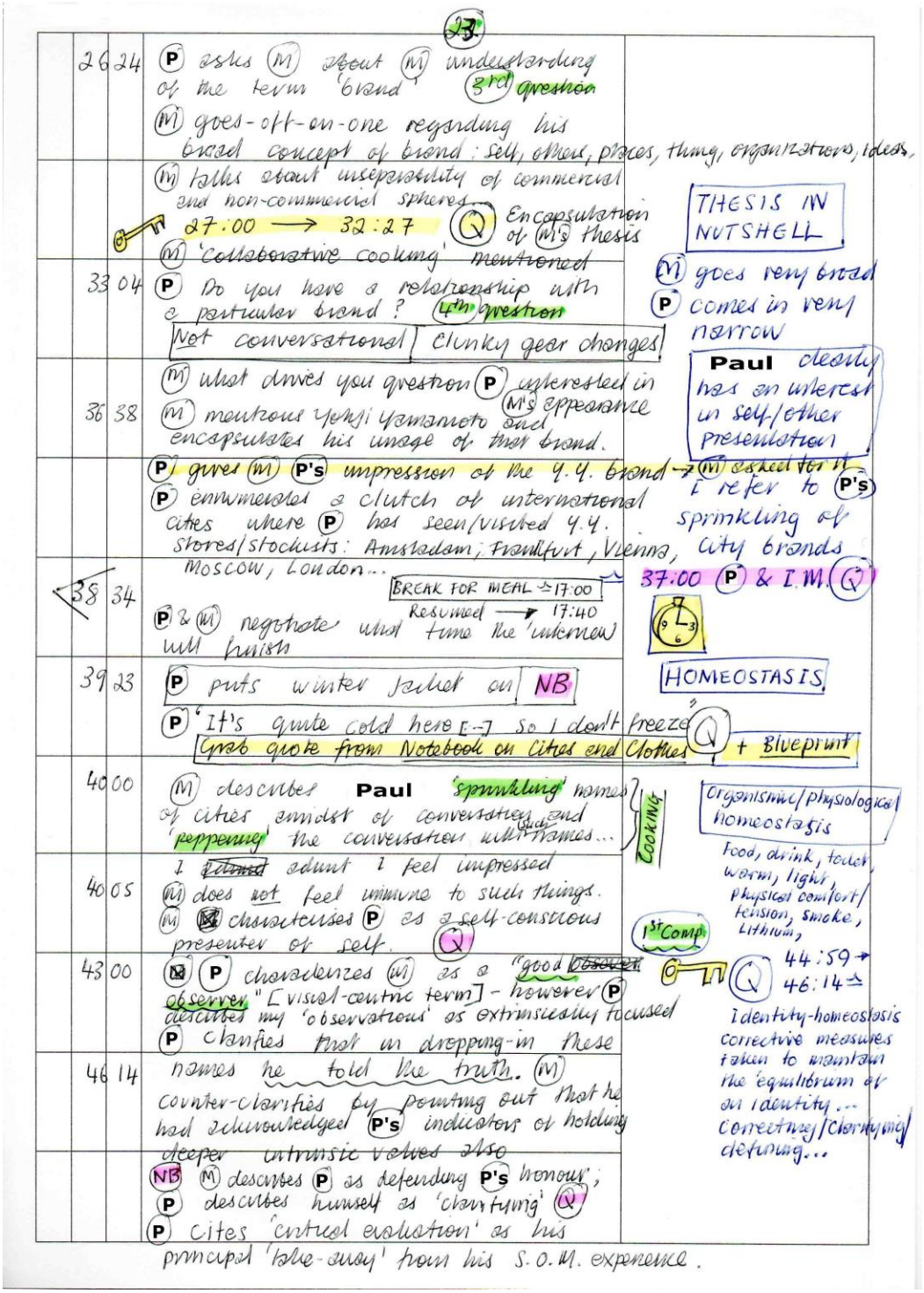


Figure 4.4 Uni-Log, Conversation No. 8 - Redacted Extract
Produced: 29th Feb. 2012 (15:31-N. A.)

I thus created three composite viewing-logs: the first comprising of noticings/meta-noticings pertaining to the twice-viewed recordings of conversations 1-3; the second comprising of noticings/meta-noticings pertaining to the twice-viewed recordings of conversations

4-6; and the third comprising of noticings/meta-noticings pertaining to the twice-viewed recordings of conversations 7-10. I subsequently amalgamated, and further compressed, the noticings into one document - what I called a uni-log [Figure 4.4, (previous page) and Table 4.6]. I wanted a single (manageable) document that brought together all of my most salient noticings, pertaining to all ten research conversations, under one roof, so to speak.

Table 4.6

Creation of Uni-Log - Based on Composite Viewing-Logs		
No.	**Date**	**Time**
1		
2	28 Feb. 2012	(12:26-17:02)
3		
4	28 Feb. 2012	(17:48-20:38)
5	28 Feb. 2012	(20:40-23:13)
6	29 Feb. 2012	(N.A.- 03:10)
7	29 Feb. 2012	(≏12:00-14:32)
8	29 Feb. 2012	(15:31-N.A.)
9	29 Feb. 2012	(23:48-N.A.)
10	01 Mar. 2012	(11:55-16:15)

I read the (34 page) uni-log on the 02nd March 2012 (10:27-13:50), before setting out for a supervision meeting. This enabled me to get an overall impression of how the noticings related to each other as a whole. I underlined, circled, and otherwise emphasised salient aspects of the uni-log. Just before the (15:00) supervision meeting I typed the following keywords, [Figure 4.5, PTO] which I took with me to the meeting. I liken this process to producing a set of keywords for an academic paper, where the time spent researching and writing the paper qualifies (and enables) one to trust one's top-of-the-mind associations.

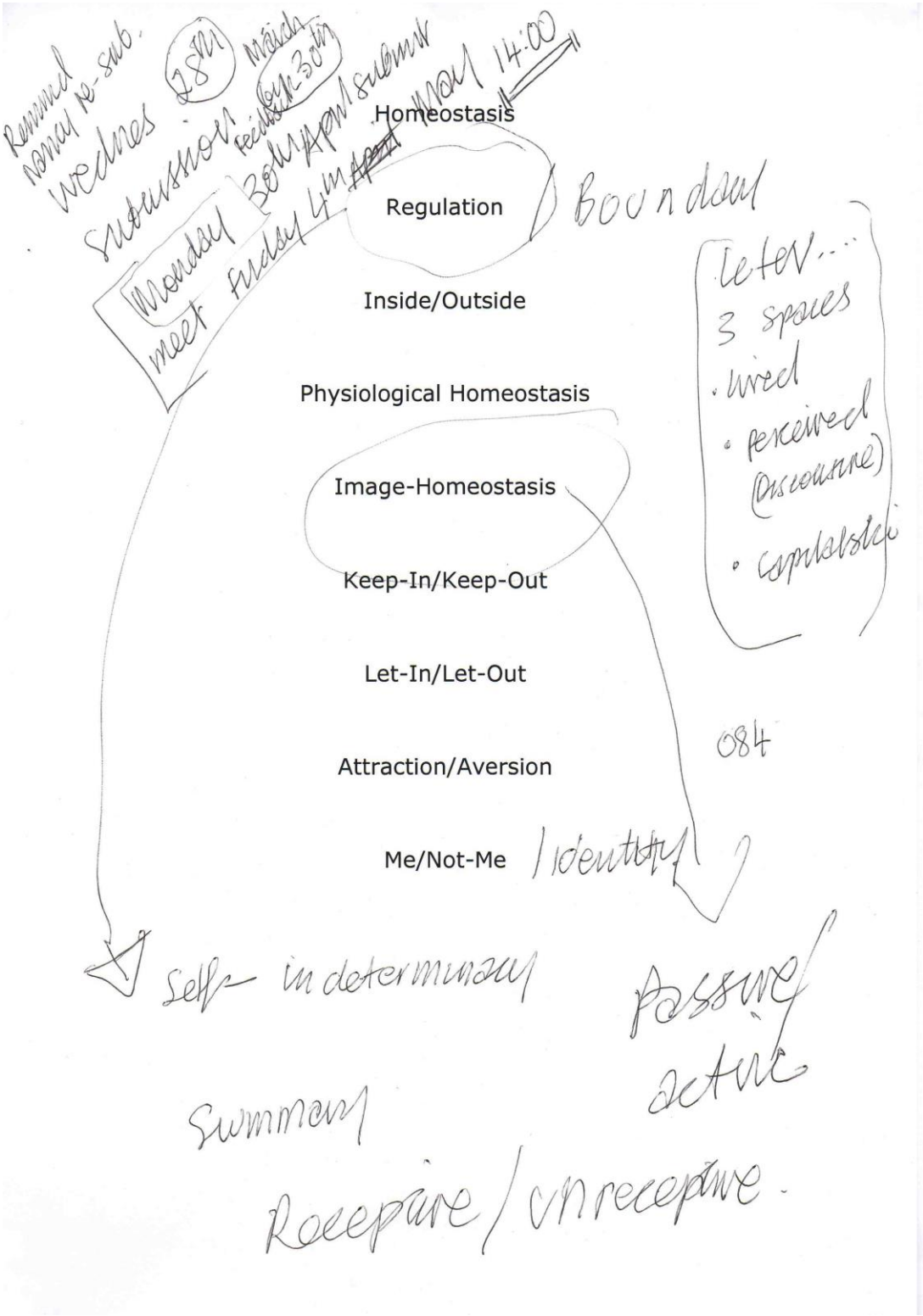


Figure 4.5 Keywords

Moss (1978, p. 86), in a quote cited earlier, writes:

> Perception and action are usually studied in isolation from one another. Yet, both neurologically and at the level of human action in lived-space, we discover that they are intertwined. To be underway in some action is to organize our perception towards some object, and inversely, to perceive a situation in the world is to be invited into active involvement in that situation. With every step forward, our view of the situation is adjusted; with every adjustment in our view, we are invited to step forward anew. Merleau-Ponty has called this continuous interplay between man and his world a *dialectic.* In this dialectic between man and his world it is difficult to distinguish strictly between perception and action […].

Powers (2005, p. 41) similarly writes:

> What an organism senses affects what it does, *and what it does affects what it senses.* […] The effects of behavior in altering subsequent stimuli, and even in directly causing stimulation, have certainly been noticed, but there has as yet been no *correct* analysis of this in any fully developed psychological theory.

You will perhaps, here, see the basis for the inseparability of experiencing and action. Every time we do something (speak, walk, eat, listen, write etc.,) we modify our own, ongoing, experiencing; and that, now-modified, ongoing experiencing, provides a particular incentive for subsequent actions. Ducasse (1964, p. 111) puts it this way:

> This process - of inspiration-creation-contemplation-judgment-and correction or approval - is repeated again and again until the musical composition, or as the case may be the painting, or statue, or work of one of the other arts, is finished […].

As mentioned previously, this inseparability of experiencing and action led Rolf von Eckartsberg to coin the term 'experiaction'. This,

in turn, helped me to question the, nominal, division of acts of 'consumption' from acts of 'production'.

I built my research, then, on the understanding that the research-conversation-scenario, including the participants, itself constituted a dynamic 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' of latent data. As Kvale (1996, p. 132) writes, "Ideally, the testing of hypotheses and interpretations is finished by the end of the interview […]". Kvale (2003, p. 290) refers to this process as, "[…] *communicative validity,* in the sense of testing observations and interpretations in a dialogue […]". My subsequent, contextualized, interaction with spin-off texts, such as viewing-logs, has received encouragement from Atkinson and Coffey (2004, p. 59), who write:

> It is tempting, when undertaking ethnographic fieldwork or some similar piece of qualitative research, to treat observational and oral data (such as may be derived from interviews or recorded interaction) as the primary data, and any documentary material as secondary. […] We would urge that the documentary materials should be regarded as data in their own right.

By augmenting this text-based view of data with the embodied (phenomenological) experiencing of context-embedded research volunteers and researcher, we arrive at the, for me, seductive notion that a researcher's 'data' always already comprises of a 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' of concurrent goings-on, from which his/her momentary attentiveness selects focal phenomena.

Rather than viewing research volunteers as repositories of knowledge that I set out to mine, I, instead, viewed each research conversation as a co-creative initiative. However, once the volunteers and I had created the DVD recordings of the 'live' events, the recordings became pieces of data within subsequent

data-viewing fields. Thus the research-conversation-recordings became, for me, as a researcher, movie-like phenomena. And, like Walter Murch and Wim Wenders, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, I felt free to attend to my own inner-goings-on whilst viewing the 'movies'. And, importantly, like Roland Barthes, also quoted at the beginning of this chapter, I felt at liberty to attend to any other aspects of the 'field' that vied for my attention as I watched a research-conversation recording. In short, I take it as axiomatic that a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed approach to research must embrace a potentially field-wide level of focus. I wanted to address full-blown human experiaction within the research process. To seek to focus on the during-research-conversation-'inter-experiaction', to the exclusion of the post-conversation-data-analysis/write-up-'experiaction', would surely miss the whole point. I therefore accept, as a limiting condition of my research, a state of affairs well expressed by Stacey (1988, p. 23):

> With very rare exceptions it is the researcher who narrates, who "authors" the ethnography. In the last instance an ethnography is a written document structured primarily by a researcher's purposes, offering a researcher's interpretations, registered in a researcher's voice.

Chapter 5: Introducing the Themes

5.1 Introduction

Towards the end of the last chapter I presented the list of keywords that arose through the distilling process that I called 'data reduction'. You will note that the term 'homeostasis' features at the top of the list - the first word that 'came to mind' when I compiled the list. The term also appears twice-more, in the nine-item list, in the forms of 'physiological homeostasis' and 'image-homeostasis'. I had not, at the time I produced the keywords, specifically researched the notion of homeostasis, but clearly I felt I had a sufficient grasp of the concept to enable me to employ it. Given the term's prominence in my keywords I felt inclined to read more deeply around the topic. This led me to some unexpected discoveries.

I learned that, what I called 'physiological homeostasis', constitutes the original use of the term. Cooper (2008, p. 420) tells us that, "The stabilisation of bodily states is now termed homeostasis, a word introduced 70 years ago by the physiologist, Walter Cannon." [From Cannon himself (Cannon 1939, p. 24) we read:

> The coördinated physiological processes which maintain most of the steady states in the organism are so complex and so peculiar to living beings - involving, as they may, the brain and nerves, the heart, lungs, kidneys and spleen, all working coöperatively - that I have suggested a special designation for these states, *homeostasis*.]

Cooper (2008, p. 420) continues:

> Shortly afterwards, [1948] the engineering mathematician, Norbert Weiner, introduced the concept of negative feedback

which became central to physiologists' ideas of how homeostasis worked.

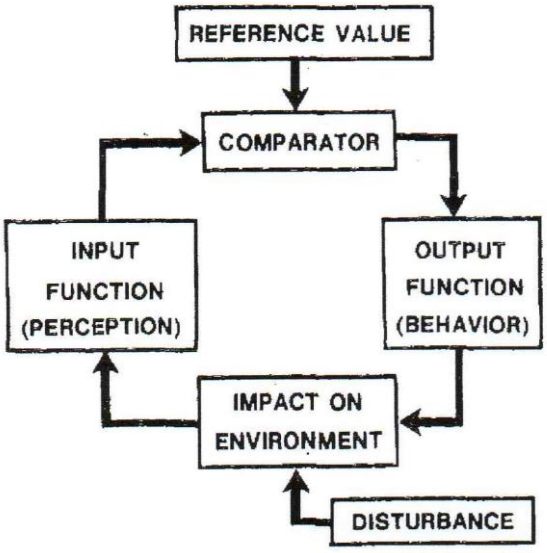


Figure 5.1 The Negative Feedback Loop - the Basic Unit of Cybernetic Control, Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 112)

According to Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 112), the concept became know as the *negative* feedback loop because, "its function is to negate, or reduce, sensed deviations from a comparison [reference] value." In different words, a person's perceiving and behaving work together, such that the person behaves in a manner that 'impacts on the environment' in a manner which makes his/her immediate (post-behaviour) perception more closely matched to his/her 'inner' expectations, or preferences, represented by his/her 'reference value(s)'. The outcome of the comparison, between his/her immediate perception and his/her reference value(s), drives subsequent behaviour. If the perception closely matches the reference value(s), then s/he will *not* have to act/behave in order to negate a deviation from the reference value(s). If, on the other hand, his/her perception mismatches (when compared with) his/her internal reference value(s) then s/he will, more likely, act to try to reduce the discrepancy. His/her immediate (post-behaviour)

sensing will - when compared, anew, with the reference value(s) - tell him/her whether his action/behaviour has brought his/her perceiving into line with his/her reference value(s), or whether s/he needs to persist in that direction.

Cooper (2008, p. 426) continues:

> Wiener recognised that negative feedback underpins homeostasis and that this is an essential condition for the continuation of life […]. Nowadays, negative feedback loops to achieve homeostatic control of essential physiological variables are familiar from textbook diagrams. […]
>
> Cannon's last major co-worker, [Arturo] Rosenblueth, working with Wiener at the same time, saw how homeostasis could be operationalised by introducing the engineering principle of negative feedback. Homeostasis was lifted from an updating of [Claude] Bernard's concept [by Cannon (1939)] to a working proposition.

In 1878 Claude Bernard had written (Fulton 1966) that:

> […] the *milieu intérieur* [internal environment] surrounding the organs, the tissues and their elements never varies; atmospheric changes cannot penetrate beyond it and it is therefore true to say that the physical conditions of environment are unchanging in a higher animal: each one is surrounded by this invariable *milieu* which is, as it were, an atmosphere proper to itself in an ever-changing cosmic environment. Here we have an organism which has enclosed itself in a kind of hot-house. The perpetual changes of external conditions cannot reach it; it is not subject to them, but is free and independent.

Bernard's notion of an independent *milieu intérieur*, then, predated Cannon's development of the concept of homeostasis. Cannon's concept subsequently became widely adopted.

Wiener (1948, p. 19) writing about the origin of the term 'cybernetics' wrote:

> Thus as far back as four years ago, [circa 1944] the group of scientists about Dr. Rosenblueth and myself had already become aware of the essential unity of the set of problems centring about communication, control, and statistical mechanics, whether in the machine or in living tissue. On the other hand, we were seriously hampered by the lack of unity of the literature concerning these problems, and by the absence of any common terminology, or even a single name for the field. After much consideration, we have come to the conclusion that all the existing terminology has too heavy a bias to one side [the machine] or another [living tissue] to serve the future development of the field as well as it should; and as happens so often with scientists, we have been forced to coin at least one artificial neo-Greek expression to fill the gap. We have decided to call the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal, by the same 'Cybernetics', which we form from the Greek *Kuberneties* or 'steersman'

Stagner (1977, p. 109), provides an example of how the cybernetic feedback loop helps to explain homeostasis:

> More precisely, we can say that there is a center in the hypothalamus [a sensing function] which registers a certain optimum or expected level of glucose. [a reference level] If the input (level in the blood stream) falls below this level by a threshold amount, [via comparison with the reference level/value] energy is mobilized and action initiated to restore the proper equilibrium. [See Figure 5.1 above]

Thus, the cybernetic negative feedback loop models the process that explains how steady states prevail in human beings and also how, say, a thermostat works. In the case of the latter, an individual sets the dial (reference value) at the desired temperature setting. A sensor in the thermostat measures the actual ambient temperature, relative to the reference setting, and adjusts the

output of the heating system, turning it either on or off, in order to maintain the room temperature at the desired-by-operator level.

5.2 Psychological Homeostasis

John Fletcher became one of the first people to apply Cannon's notion of homeostasis to the psychological realm. In his article "The Wisdom of the Mind" (1938, p. 7) he wrote:

> The intention of this paper is, in pursuance of the notion suggested in the title, [echoing Walter Cannon's *The Wisdom of the Body* (1939) cited earlier] to point out that the mind, no less than the body has its devices, mechanisms, or modes of response by which it seeks to maintain its equilibrium and to defend itself against pain and injury.

Fletcher then goes on to posit five, "illustrative instances of mental defences" which I will briefly outline here. (1) Repression, defined by Sigmund Freud as, "the process by which a mental act capable of becoming conscious … is made unconscious and forced back into the unconscious system". [Allen and Unwin (1922), "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis", London, pp. 248-249, 287.] Fletcher continues:

> […] even perceptual processes, as well as those of thinking, have been shown to be affected by determining tendencies and organic sets of the mind itself. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

Thus - whether through (a) an unwitting refusal to allow a particular train of thought, or (b) say, a prejudicial mindset that blinds one to 'the obvious' - people may regulate their psychological goings-on. Fletcher continues with his next example of psychological homeostasis (2) Dissociation, which he defines as, "a restriction of the field of consciousness […] an act of screening off, of pruning, of

losing some to save the rest." I understand this as a conscious distancing of oneself from certain sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and ideas etc., perhaps through strategic disregard. Fletcher continues with (3) Compensation:

> If homeostasis may be interpreted broadly to apply to social status as well at bodily temperature we may extend its meaning so as to explain the positiveness and the energy of our reactions against personal insults, which are calculated to disturb that status.

Fletcher also extends the notion of 'homeostatic compensation' to the perceptual realm, "Snow that seems white in the sunlight also seems white in the moonlight, although sunlight is 800,000 times as bright as full-moonlight." Thus we can see how people may act in ways which seek to guard against threats to their sense of self-esteem. And, in the example of vision, our eyes can compensate for differing light conditions rendering the perceived colour as constant. Regarding the next example, (4) Regression, Fletcher writes:

> The drug addict cannot face the responsibilities and discomforts of his life in a normal way, nor is he willing to pay the price the gods have placed upon happiness. So he must render his higher brain centres insensitive to the actualities of his existence and induce in himself the illusion of well-being by induced regression.

Here we see an example of someone refusing to 'face the music' and, instead seeking chemical solace. The addict does compulsively what a non-addict might do more selectively. Fletcher's final example of psychological homeostasis takes the form of (5) Escape, which may manifest as: bodily flight, amnesia, utopianism, day-dreaming, fantasising, and introversion. Thus a person may literally or figuratively run away from perceived psychological danger or

discomfiture. It seems that these five examples overlap somewhat. One may view drug addiction as a form of escape, as well as a form of regression. And dissociation seems akin to escape, since both dissociation and escape involve avoidance. However, Fletcher (1938) makes no claim of water-tightness (or exhaustiveness), with regard to his illustrative examples of psychological homeostasis.

5.3 Psychology and the Negative Feedback Loop

Whist Fletcher made an early effort to apply the concept of homeostasis to the psychological realm, we can now go on to see how cybernetically-informed theorists have, more recently, applied the notion of the negative feedback loop to personal psychological functioning. As suggested earlier, cyberneticists draw comparisons between certain principles of control applicable in (a) the realm of engineering and mathematics, and (b) in physiological regulatory processes. Cooper (2008, p. 425) identifies, and encapsulates, the common denominator as "*negative* feedback - information that brings the output [of a system] into closer proximity to the designated goal." Powers (2005) calls his brand of cybernetic theory, Perceptual Control Theory (PCT). Powers views the cybernetic feedback loop, when applied to humans, as premised, ultimately, on an individual controlling what s/he perceives. He characterises PCT as (p. 284):

> […] the concept of behavior as a feedback process organized around the control of perception, and reorganized as a way of maintaining ourselves in a peculiarly human condition defined by intrinsic reference levels.

Powers thus suggests that human beings act in order to control what they perceive; they want to perceive what their subjectively-held 'reference levels/values' incline them to desire, expect, prefer,

and so on. Thus, seen from a Perceptual Control Theory [PCT] perspective, we may view all human conduct as self-regulatory. The operative 'reference levels', against which people benchmark their immediate perceptions, may take many forms. Depending on a person's preferences, expectations, conditioning, and the like, [in general his/her 'reference values'] s/he will behave in ways calculated to bring what s/he senses/perceives, from moment to moment, into closer accord with his/her reference value(s). This does not mean that a person can not change his/her reference value(s). It does mean, however, that at any point in time, his/her immediate perceivings/sensings will get benchmarked against the reference values that manifest concurrently with those perceivings/sensings. This effectively amounts to a comparison between 'actual' and 'preferred' states of being. Power's (2005), then, presents a dynamic picture of momentary human being; a picture that casts human beings as volitional, relative to certain internally-operative reference values. So, unlike physiological homeostasis, which entails the maintenance of steady, inner-body, states within fairly narrow margins for error, PCT applies the same underlying principle, of negative feedback, to psycho-behavioural goings-on.

Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 113) encapsulate, what they call just, control theory:

> [The central function of a feedback system] is not to create "behaviour." Its purpose is to create and maintain the perception of a specific desired condition: that is, whatever condition constitutes its reference value or standard of comparison.

You will note that, when applied to humans, the cybernetic negative feedback model emphasises the self-regulation of what a person

senses, relative to his/her preferred states of being. Any environment-changing behaviour that a person enacts, then, serves to bring the behaving-person's immediately-subsequent-perceptions more into line with his/her expected or preferred state.

5.4 'Behavior Settings'

We can now turn, finally, to the application of the cybernetic feedback model to a domain called ecological psychology. Roger Barker, one of the founders of this domain, calls his unit of analysis "behavior settings". Barker (1963, p. 29) writes:

> Altogether, then, there is abundant evidence that behavior settings, like many bio-physical entities, are strongly self-regulated systems which regulate the behavior episodes within them as molecules regulate atoms, as organs regulate cells, and as structures regulate the beams of which they are constructed.

He continues (p. 34):

> The inhabitants of behavior settings always have the potentiality, and usually the active tendency, to exhibit a greater variety of behavior than the setting requires or can tolerate. The behavior setting control mechanism reduces this variety to the amount appropriate to the setting, and maintains it within an acceptable range of values.

Barker, then, views social settings as self-regulating systems, which operate in ways akin to the functioning of self-regulating individuals. In the case of 'behavior settings' internalised norms held within participants, along with externally-policed 'laws' and 'regulations', work in concert to ensure that setting-dwellers abide by the 'rules', relative to a particular setting. For example, speed cameras usually serve as the 'sensing mechanisms' that monitor vehicle speeds relative to pre-set speed limits (reference values).

When a vehicle exceeds the speed limit a camera gets activated by an 'executive mechanism' setting in motion a process of financial punishment, intended, presumably, to inhibit future speeding via this 'deviation-countering mechanism'. In extreme cases the driver my get 'vetoed' - barred from the road. Thus the road constitutes a regulated 'behavior setting' of sorts (Wicker 1979, pp. 13-15).

Wicker (1979, p. 17) writes:

> The careful observer of the environment comes to recognize a series of nested - that is, hierarchically ordered - self-regulating systems that fit together somewhat like the layers of an onion. Each system is a component of a larger system, and each contains, within its boundaries, a number of component systems.

This way of thinking draws together the notions of homeostasis (inner-body regulation), PCT and control theory (where an individual seeks to regulate his/her own perceptions), and social regulation (where 'behavior settings', such as cinemas, classrooms, and libraries, conspire, systematically, to keep human conduct in check, within those settings).

More recently Wicker (2012, p. 485) has extended the ecological psychology of 'behavior settings' to include the experiences of setting-participants in relation to the settings themselves:

> Applied to people's encounters with behavior settings, experience includes what occupants sense or feel from direct contact with physical stimuli and happenings in settings, and their adjustments to them. It also includes the residuals of such contact. […] [D]ifferent occupants may achieve different patterns of satisfactions, and […] settings of different genotypes provide different satisfaction possibilities […]. [Experience in settings] also includes symbolic meanings that occupants attach to activities, objects, and spaces that they

encounter [such as power, authority, exclusivity, awe, inspiration, and community].

It seems to me that, through this approach, Wicker wants to attribute a person's experience, in toto, to environmental stimuli, residuals thereof, and connotations triggered thereby. I would prefer to think that a person's experiencing, whilst within a particular setting, may extend to phenomena 'outside' of the setting, via, say, associational thinking and feelings not immediately linked to the setting. For example, a person may have argued with someone en route to the setting and this fracas may colour his/her experiencing and actions within the setting.

5.5 Keywords

Given that the term 'homeostasis' turned up three times in my list of keywords, [Fig. 5.2, PT0] it seemed that it may constitute one of the key concepts that would inform my 'data analysis'. Further scrutiny of the keywords reveals 'Regulation', 'Inside/Outside', 'Keep-in/Keep-Out, and 'Let-In/Let-Out' - which all relate strongly to the notion of control, whether construed at: (a) an inner-body level, (b) at the level of personal behaviour, or, indeed, at (c) the level of a 'behavior setting'.

Thus, when it came to creating the five 'themes', that structured my writing in relation to 'data', I selected the following terms. (1) 'Access' - linked to the keywords: 'Regulation', 'Inside/Outside', and 'Keep-In/Keep-Out' - pertaining to the control of access to bounded spaces. (2) 'Configuration' - linked to the keywords: 'Regulation', 'Attraction/Aversion', and 'Me/Not-Me' - pertaining to the perceived suitability [or not] of particular arrangements of constituent 'elements' within bounded spaces). (3) 'Levels' - linked to the

keywords: 'Homeostasis', 'Regulation', 'Physiological Homeostasis', 'Keep-In/Keep-Out', 'Let-In/Let-Out', and 'Attraction/Aversion' - pertaining to, for example, hydration-levels, hunger-levels, light-levels, temperature-levels, thirst-levels, and levels of attraction/aversion). (4) 'Association' - linked to the keywords: 'Image Homeostasis', 'Let-In/Let-out', and 'Me/Not-Me' - pertaining to what a person/organisation feels comfortable associating with; what s/he/it lets into his/her/its life/home/organisation, and what s/he/it considers suitable for him/her/it to associate with, in terms of people, places, objects, other organisations, and ideas, etc. And, finally, (5) 'Expression' - linked particularly to the keywords: 'Inside/Outside', 'Keep-In/Keep-Out', and 'Let-In/Let-Out' - pertaining to the regulation of communicative outputs, actions, or gestures, in terms of expressing and/or withholding. [See Fig. 5.3]

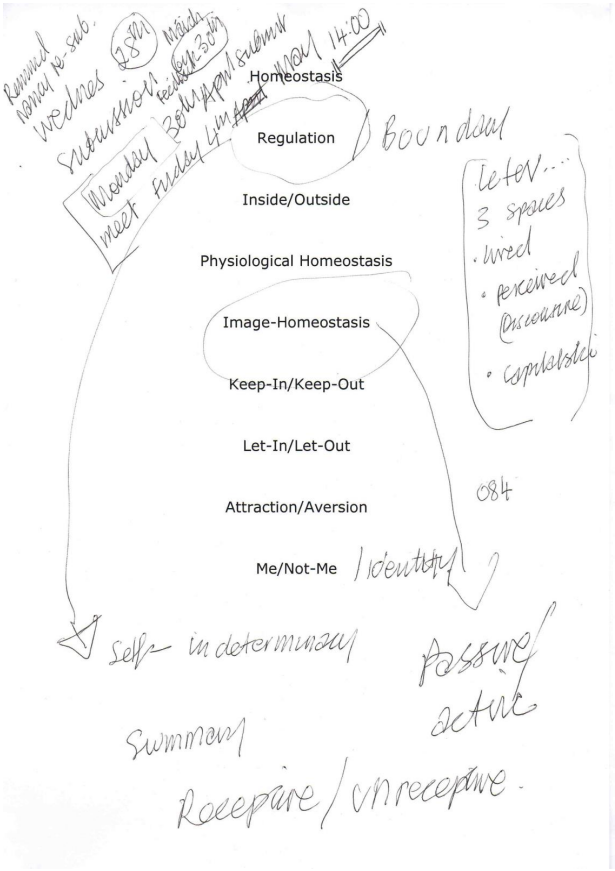


Figure 5.2 Keywords

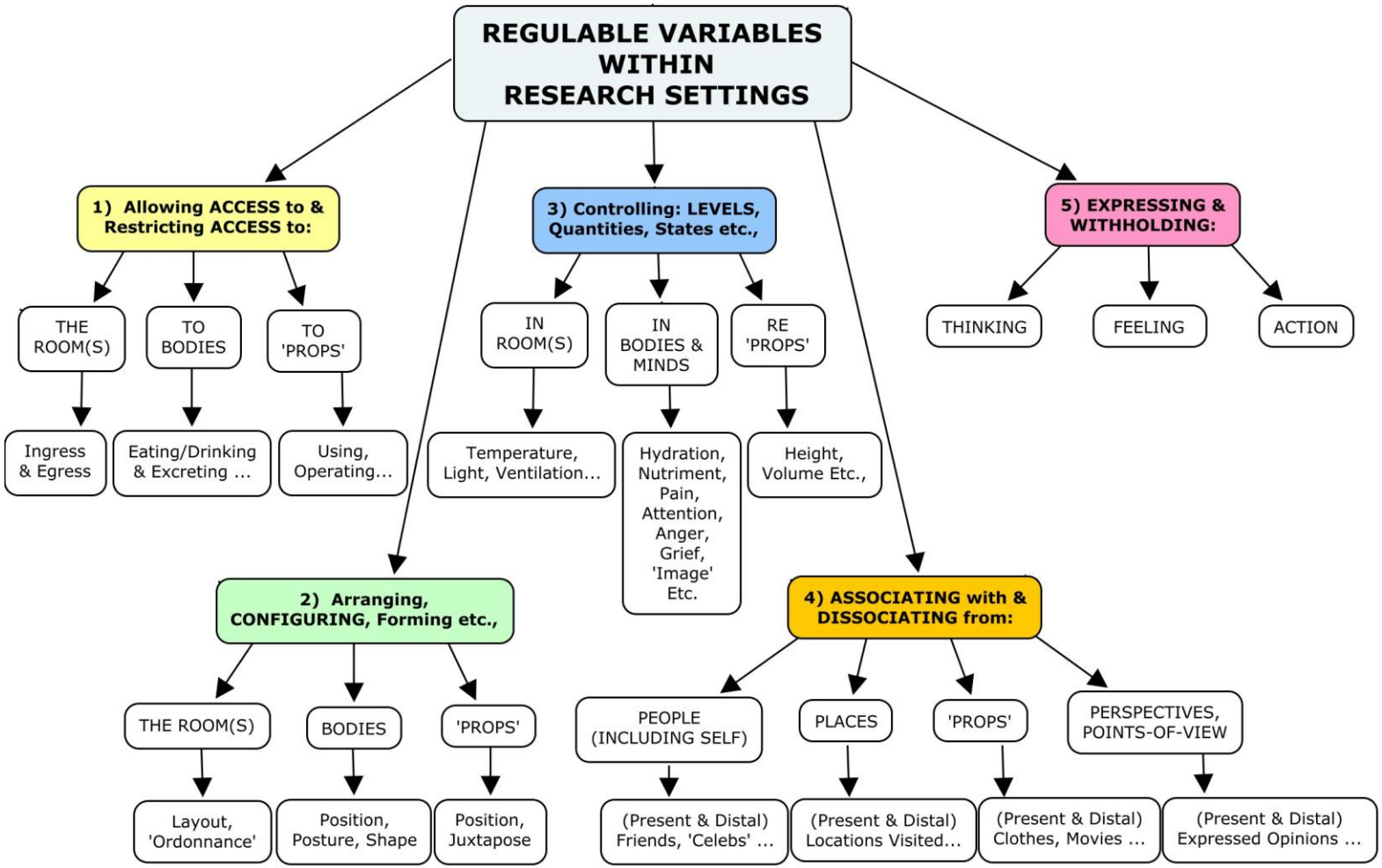


Figure 5.3 Data Themes

5.6 Concluding

In this chapter I have shown how I arrived at my five 'themes'. They closely relate to the keywords that I had produced in advance of 'discovering' the cybernetic negative feedback model - which functions as a general, more-contemporary, and specified explanation of the processes underpinning forms of physiological, psychological, and situational homeostasis.

A field-theoretical orientation informed my thinking throughout my research project. Consequently I considered the goings-on in, and around, data-viewing 'behavior settings', and, likewise, the thesis-writing 'behavior settings', as, potentially, just as relevant to my research as the particular texts that I looked at, or worked on, in those settings. Furthermore, the thinking and feeling that went on within me, whilst viewing particular texts, in particular settings, could also, at any point, become momentarily salient in my experiencing. Hence the notion of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' covered the entire gamut of particulars that one may have attended to from moment to moment. I could have ignored such attentional vacillation, but for me to have ignored it would have meant failing to address the very phenomenon that I professed to study, namely, full-blown momentary 'experiaction'. It would have seemed remiss of me, if I had sought to focus on the experiaction represented in the audio-visual recordings of research conversations, to the exclusion of my whilst-doing-data-analysis experiaction and my whilst-writing-up-data-analysis experiaction. I trust that this explains my inclusion of certain reflexive passages in and amongst the 'data analysis' that follows.

Chapter 6: Access

6.1 Introduction

Through the process of systematic data-reduction, described in chapter 4, I arrived at five data themes: 'access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'. Each of these themes constitutes, what I call, a 'regulable variable'. And each of the regulable variables only begins to make sense when viewed in the light of the cybernetic negative feedback model, introduced in chapter 5. [Fig. 6.1, below] As a quick reminder, the negative feedback model posits that a person - or a sub-system within a person; or, indeed, the micro-environmental system ('behavior setting') in which a person resides - will kick into action when s/he/it senses a threat to his/her/its preferred state - the state represented by his/her/its most salient, currently-operative, 'reference value(s)', goal-state(s), or preferred/expected state(s). His/her/its immediate [PTO]

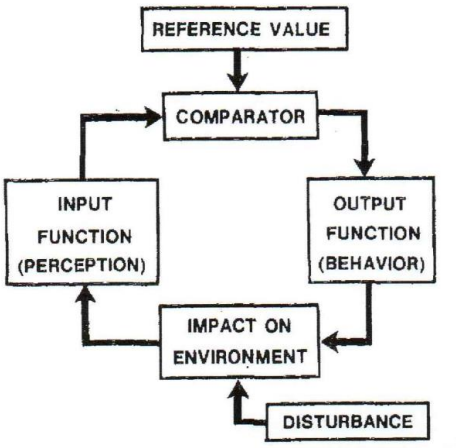


Figure 6.1 The Negative Feedback Loop - the Basic Unit of Cybernetic Control, Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 112)

perceiving/sensing gets benchmarked against his/her/its preferred 'reference value(s)' ('comparator'). In the wake of a discrepancy between 'actual' and 'preferred' states, the actional-upshot takes the form of 'output' calculated to bring his/her/its immediately-subsequent perceiving/sensing more into line with his/her/its reference value(s). The five regulable variables that I have identified ['access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'] constitute those abstract 'things' that s/he/it can act upon in the process of seeking to bring his/her/its sensing/perceiving more into line with his/her/its reference value(s). We start then with 'access', and in particular the metaphor that underpins the very notion of spatial access.

6.2 The Container Metaphor

> We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces. Thus we also view them as containers with an inside and an outside. Rooms and houses are obvious containers. Moving from room to room is moving from one container to another, that is, moving *out of* one room and *into* another. We even give solid objects this orientation, as when we break a rock open to see what's inside it. We impose this orientation on our natural environment as well. A clearing in the woods is seen as having a bounding surface, and we can view ourselves as being *in* the clearing or *out of* the clearing, *in* the woods or *out of* the woods. A clearing in the woods has something we can perceive as a natural boundary - the fuzzy area where the trees more or less stop and the clearing more or less begins. But even where there is no natural physical boundary that can be viewed as defining a container, we impose boundaries - marking off territory so that it has an inside and a bounding surface - whether a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane. There are few human instincts more basic than territoriality. And such defining of territory, putting a boundary around it, is an act of quantification. Bounded objects, whether human beings,

> rocks, or land areas, have sizes. This allows them to be quantified in terms of the amount of substance they contain. Kansas, for example, is a bounded area - a CONTAINER - which is why we can say, "There's a lot of land *in* Kansas.
>
> Substances can themselves be viewed as containers. Take a tub of water, for example. When you get into the tub, you get into the water. Both the tub and the water are viewed as containers, but of different sorts. The tub is a CONTAINER OBJECT, while the water is a CONTAINER SUBSTANCE.
>
> - Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp. 29-32)

I follow Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in using capital letters when identifying particular metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson go on to suggest that, "VISUAL FIELDS ARE CONTAINERS", meaning that things *come in* and *out* of view - with regard to the limits of what we can see at any point in time. According to Lakoff and Johnson, events and actions, may function as metaphorical CONTAINER OBJECTS, e.g., he takes part *in* a research conversation and he enjoys taking part *in* a marathon run. Activities may constitute metaphorical CONTAINER SUBSTANCES, e.g., he immerses himself *in* the process of writing. And states of being may function metaphorically as CONTAINERS, as when we say, he's *in* love with his wife, or she's *in* a joyful state.

If we view our body as a CONTAINER OBJECT, then the acts of eating and drinking comprise of putting things *into* that container. Refusing, or restricting, the ingestion of certain types of food and drink constitutes a form of regulatory behaviour - regulating what, and how much, gains access to the body-as-container. The plot thickens when we begin to think of people's involvement with non-food phenomena, such as texts, as akin to the consumption of food and drink. Thus, when 'consuming' movies, books, or music we take these metaphorical foods *in* via our particular 'product-

relevant' senses. As Schelling (1984, pp. 343-344), quoted earlier, put it:

> We consume with our mouths and noses and ears and eyes and proprioceptors and skin and fingertips, and with the nerves that react to external stimuli and internal hormones; we consume relief from pain and fatigue, itching and thirst. But we also consume by thinking. We consume past events we can bring up from memory; future events that we can believe will happen; contemporary circumstances not physically present […] and we can even tease ourselves into believing and consuming thoughts that are intended only to please.

In an important sense, our so-called 'mind' constitutes a receptacle into which *incoming* perceivings/sensings flow. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 148) again:

> […] the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor is based on still more basic metaphors. For example, it is based partly on the CONDUIT metaphor, according to which IDEAS ARE OBJECTS and we can get them from outside ourselves. It also assumes the MIND IS A CONTAINER metaphor, which establishes a similarity between the mind and the body - both being CONTAINERS. Together with the CONDUIT metaphor, we get the complex metaphor in which IDEAS ARE OBJECTS THAT COME INTO THE MIND, just as pieces of food are objects that come into the body.

Why do I mention all this in relation to the notion of regulating access? Because if we view a research room as a container, and if we view each research-participant's body as a container, and if we view each research-participant's mind as a container, then we can conceptualise the goings-on, within that research setting, in terms of the regulation of access to (and traffic between) these various nested containers, and, indeed, others that I will mention later. Respectively this involves (1) someone (or something) regulating access to the physical space of the research room - what gets in

and out. (2) It involves regulating access to the participants' bodies, via breathing, eating and drinking - what gets in *and out* - materials inside a body gain access to the 'outside world' when they get expressed from within that body. (3) The perceiving/sensing function of an individual, according to the negative feedback model, determines what finds its way, via the sensor signal, to the benchmarking 'department' (within an individual), where his/her immediate perceivings/sensings get pattern-matched against his/her currently-held 'reference value(s)', resulting in either a match or a mismatch thereof. A mismatch, between immediate sensings and reference value(s), sponsors action (via an 'error signal') which seeks to bring subsequent perceivings/sensings more into line with the individual's currently held reference value(s). A close match between a current perception and a preferred reference value obviates any need for 'remedial action'. Without thus distinguishing between outer-body states and inner-body/mind states, the notions of seeking to harmonise one's perception of outer-goings-on with inner-held preferences would make no sense. The negative feedback model, then, posits a world that we can act on, in addition to our perception thereof. However, our exploration doesn't stop here.

The camcorder used to record the research conversations, itself, has a restricted and regulable field of vision, as do the human participants. Furthermore, written texts constitute containers, of sorts, with insides, outsides, and contents. A student and his supervisors, for example, co-determine what finds its way *into* his PhD thesis. So, when I talk in terms of regulating access within a research setting I have 'in mind' regulating access to: the room itself; to the bodies within the room; to the, nominal, 'minds' within the bodies; to the 'props' within the rooms; to the contents of the camcorder's frame; and to the 18-minute-long movie [screened

prior to each of the ten research conversations] i.e., what got put *into* the film and what can a viewer 'take out' and 'ingest' from the movie? Sufia (conversation No. 7), for example, could understand the French-language content without reading the subtitles; Matt (conversation No. 6), a sight-impaired person, could not see, but he could hear the movie. Our acquired skills and sensory capacities inform what we can readily 'take' from, in this case, a movie.

Much of what follows, in this chapter, does not appear in my viewing-logs relating to research conversations; I have subsequently added some of the noticings, included here, in line with a field-theoretical orientation, which encourages us to view the three-dimensional research setting as an integral component of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' of each participant, including myself. The research setting can so easily become part of the taken-for-granted infrastructure that supports the 'main event'. A field-theoretical perspective ensures that the researcher takes account of the interconnectedness and functional inseparability of research participants and research settings.

6.3 Data

It seems very important, to me, not to characterise 'data' as something separate from the 'data analyst'. When I enter a research setting with a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed orientation, I will notice whatever I notice in any nook or cranny of my immediate 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' and I will do whatever I do. One may question the relevance of some of my noticings and actions, but what I notice and do constitutes the reality of my existence from moment to moment, for better or for worse.

In an important sense, the very naming of a particular episode, such as a 'research conversation', serves to prime participants, constraining and delimiting what might count as 'legitimate' or 'relevant' conduct therein. Thus the event label functions like a Procrustean bed which implicitly requires us to lop off extraneous material or to stretch parts of our testimony to fit it to the contours of the (research conversation) bed. It seems to me that in any given research setting, a participant's 'data' may take the form of any aspect of the whole 'field' - the 360°-'inner'-'outer' sphere - that s/he may attend to momentarily. In the case of a research conversation, two somewhat idiosyncratically perceived 'fields' interact. Von Eckartsberg (1971, p. 373) calls the interface between two experiencing and active individuals, 'inter-experiaction'. Elsewhere von Eckartsberg (1978, p. 200) defines 'experiaction' as, "[…] a way of conceiving of the *unity* of experience and action in any given instance of life lived through […]".

When viewed from a field-theoretical perspective, a DVD recording of a research conversation constitutes just one aspect of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' of the analyst as s/he 'analyses data'. Whilst watching or reading 'data' a person may attend to, or engage with, any aspect of his/her dynamic 'field', and whatever s/he notices and does whilst nominally 'analysing data' forms a part of his/her 'field' that, itself, contains the nominal 'data', such as a DVD recording. A written or verbal, representation of the analyst's combined experiences and actions as s/he nominally 'analyses data', itself becomes 'data' that the analyst may subsequently attend to as a part of a subsequent 'field'. A focal text, such as a transcript, constitutes only one of the constituent parts of the analyst's dynamic 'field' as s/he reads it. A person can attend to, and engage with, any aspect(s) of his/her momentary, dynamic 'field', and his/her response to the phenomena s/he notices may

form the foundation for further associative digressions and actions on his/her part. Importantly, as Laing (1967, p. 15) puts it, "The other person's behaviour is an experience of mine. My behaviour is an experience of the other." To paraphrase Laing, I only have access to the other via *my* experience of his/her physical being, his/her expressive outputs, or representations thereof. Thus in studying experiaction within the research process, even quoting research volunteers verbatim requires the researcher to select the said quotes for inclusion and to evaluate the significance of those quotes in the light of the researcher's frame of reference and his/her overarching agenda.

6.4 Regulating Access to Research Rooms

As suggested earlier, we may think of research rooms as bounded containers. In order to gain access to these rooms, that I used when conducting the ten research conversations, I had to discuss the availability of the rooms with one or other of the receptionists at the School of Management. The receptionists could activate my bar-coded student card, such that I could then use my card to access the specific rooms that I booked. This process related to both gaining access to the rooms and to the duration of that access. I booked rooms for four-hour sessions: one hour for setting-up and for testing equipment; half an hour, or so, for watching the 18-minute-long movie; up to around two hours for the post-movie-viewing research conversation; and about half-an-hour for packing up. The rooms that I used needed to have a resident DVD player, to enable me to play the movie screened before each conversation; this meant that the receptionists necessarily assigned me to teaching rooms, designed to accommodate groups of students. Consequently, each room that I used had far more tables and chairs than I needed. Furthermore, the receptionists gave priority to

lecturers who needed rooms for conducting classes; indeed some lecturers had pre-booked particular rooms, which meant that I couldn't use the same room for each of the ten research conversations. Thus, if I wanted to use a particular room in which to conduct a research conversation I needed to follow the protocol for securing a booking. One can not simply drift into any room which takes one's fancy. Similarly, we can't, with impunity, walk into the homes of strangers; we ordinarily knock on a closed door and wait for an occupant to greet us, or to say "enter", or some such phrase. However, this practice does not usually apply to seemingly unoccupied classrooms. I didn't want a group of students to turn up, half-an-hour into a volunteer and me engaging in a research conversation, claiming that their class will begin, in the same room, in five minutes. A room booking system, when successfully administered, averts the kind of unwelcome eventuality mooted here, thus ensuring my own, interruption-related, peace-of-mind.

In addition to the regulation of room access overseen by reception staff, I prepared an A4 sheet which I slid into the Perspex holder on the wall outside of each room that I used; it read, "QUIET PLEASE! RESEARCH IN PROGRESS". This sign functioned both as an attempt to control the noise-level emanating from passersby and to deter people from entering the room during the research conversation; either eventuality might have disrupted the audio-visual recording. In the event we had no problems resulting from these potentialities.

I provided each research volunteer with a bottle of spring water and positioned it, prior to the session, on the floor at the side of his/her chair. Exceptionally, Sufia (conversation No. 7) held her bottle of water in her hand for the entire duration of the conversation. Other volunteers intermittently reached for their bottles of water, with the

exception of Ruby (conversation No. 3) who picked up her bottle of self-bought orange drink at 00:48:56 and then kept it in her hand (or on her lap) for the remainder of the conversation. I think this proximity-of-drink issue relates to the question of access in the sense of my positioning of 'props' in order to give people ready access to them. However, this proximity-of-drink issue also relates to the theme of 'configuration', [See chapter 7] as well as to 'access', namely, how one configures elements within a room also determines an individual's ease of access to certain phenomena within that room - ergonomically speaking. Similarly, my purpose-bought camcorder has a remote-control device for operating it without leaving one's seat, but given the nearness of the camcorder to the conversing research participants [both the volunteer and I appeared, sat side-by-side, during each recording] I chose to manually turn the camcorder on and off, at source. This way I could satisfy myself that the operation had indeed occurred. At the end of my first conversation, with Alia, I went through the motions of turning off the camcorder, using the remote control, only to find subsequently that the recording had continued beyond the point when I thought I had stopped it. This latter kind of positional access differs, however, from access to containers or spaces and deals more with access through expedient proximity.

6.5 Regulating Access to Our Bodies

By intermittently enquiring about their comfort levels, I ensured that research volunteers felt at liberty to leave the room, for toilet breaks, or for any other reasons. Three out of the ten volunteers availed themselves of this freedom: Neil at 01:18:00, for two minutes and twenty seconds; Bridie at 01:25:04, for three minutes and 40 seconds; and Bob at around 01:35:30, for two minutes and 44 seconds. And of these three, Neil and Bob pro-actively initiated

their own toilet breaks: Neil (01:17:56), "Excuse me Michael, would it be alright to go to the toilet?", and Bob (01:36:02), "Is there a toilet nearby Michael?" In the case of Bridie, I asked her if she felt aware of any intruding/distracting thoughts/feelings. She responded to my question my saying she needed a "comfort break".

We may think of the human body as a room-like structure. As with a literal room, individuals may, by degree, control access to this 'room' via its various points (and means) of ingress. Headphones, for example, control the flow of aural signals into the ears. As Alia (conversation No. 1, at 00:43:28) notes:

> […] the building is full of students; they've got their MP3 players in or they're on their phone, and they'll just stop in front of you. They're not aware of people around them. They're in their own little cocoon.

Similarly, when creating notes whilst viewing recordings of research conversations, and transcribing audio-visual recordings of research conversations, I strategically wore headphones in order to minimise ambient audio distractions and to enable me to maximise my ability to accurately represent the content of the audio track. In both of these examples we see individuals strategically regulating sensory input in pursuance of particular ends - immersion in music and concentration on the task of data-analysis respectively. We may also view clothes as a means of regulating which parts of our bodies we allow others to see and touch. In this regard I noted that Jane (conversation No. 9) had a shawl draped around her torso, during our video-recorded conversation, which she took off after I turned off the camcorder. Rightly or wrongly I interpreted this as a sign of, some combination of, taste, modesty, and propriety - based on the overall tenor of Jane's during-research communication. For example:

> 00:16:18 Michael: […] when you talked about the movie, and evaluating the movie, I heard things that I would associate more with a puritanical perhaps, or a more spiritual [Jane: Spiritual, right] kind of bias. […] Have I understood that correctly?
>
> Jane: Yes, yes, yes. When you were talking I was thinking about the word spirituality, then you used it, so you understood. […] Now by spirituality we would mean that people of high spirituality would not use dirty jokes and would not drink that much beer, and would not draw a lady with that type of breasts […]. Yes if we understand the word spirituality this way […] then I would say, you were right; I place myself on that continuum, closer to the Eastern part of the world.

If wearing the shawl had simply related to Jane keeping herself warm, I would have expected that Jane would have needed the shawl still more urgently when leaving the research setting, rather than removing it at the end of the conversation.

6.6 Regulating Access to Props

Upon gaining access to a research setting, for a particular duration, I went on to use my activated student card to access the audio-visual-equipment cabinet in each room. Similarly I have a purpose-bought protective bag in which I store my camcorder and tripod, and to which I have exclusive access. As stated earlier, the receptionists at the School of Management administered the control of access to the research rooms and their contents, whereas I had custodianship over my personal belongings. However, for the duration of my tenure in the room, I became the acting-regulator of access to the room. I locked the room when we had toilet breaks. Similarly, I locked each research room after I had finished preparing it for use and then set out to meet each volunteer in the foyer of the School of Management. I did not (and do not) allow anyone but

myself to get anywhere close to my camcorder bag and its contents. I also ensured that I carried a large golfing umbrella with me when travelling to, and from, each research conversation, so that, in the event of rain, I could prevent any raindrops from coming into contact with my equipment bag. Furthermore, within the outer shell of the equipment bag there reside other separate bags which contain specific pieces of kit. For example, the camcorder has its own padded zipper bag, and the tripod has a dedicated, protective zipper bag. This, for me, evokes the notion of Russian dolls nested one within another. I feel attracted to the notion of conceiving of buildings as containers which contain a multitude of constituent containers, such as my equipment bag, which themselves may contain other nested containers. Similarly, Hoffmeyer (1998, p. 36) writes:

> The membranes of living systems - at whatever level, i.e. whether they encircle sub-cellular organelles, cells, tissues, organs, or organisms - are in fact best described as interfaces facilitating a highly regulated exchange of signs between interiors and exteriors. Life should fundamentally be seen as organised around the nested set of membranes or interfaces which we call organisms […].

Whilst inanimate and animate phenomena of course differ, at the level of containers-within-containers a clear analogy exists. Indeed this container metaphor sponsors this entire 'access' chapter, in which buildings, rooms, bodies, and props all have insides and outsides and, thus, boundaries, membranes, and surfaces, across/through which we may, or may not (by degree) allow 'traffic' to pass.

6.7 Some Other Forms of Access Regulation

We may view the regulation of daylight entering the research room as an access issue of sorts. Closing the blinds, in conjunction with turning off electric lighting, enabled me to create cinema-like conditions for the screening of the preliminary movie. During conversation No. 5 (00:24:31) I strategically opened the blinds of the room, not to let more light in but rather to allow Bella and I to see outside, Michael: "I'm just thinking how nice it is actually to have this […] vista." Indeed, for conversation No. 2, with Neil, I purposely chose the room with the most dramatic and impressive outlook because Neil works in a world-class, state-of-the-art institution and I wanted to provide him with a home-from-home setting. As well as keeping Neil in the style to which he had become accustomed, this choice potentially indicated to Neil, if he chose to see it this way, that I, like him, had gained entrée into a prestigious organisation. Here we can see the use of buildings, rooms, and vistas as potential identity/status-bolstering aids.

The notion of 'access', described in this chapter, has primarily focused on the notion of adventitious phenomena entering bounded spaces, as prototypically exemplified by the acts of eating and drinking. However, we might now, for a moment, imagine a pre-industrial world, [somewhere between the 14th and 18th centuries - Williams (1988, pp. 78-79)] when people ate, drank and made fires. At this pre-modern juncture, the verb 'consume' related to such allied, elemental processes of devouring and destroying. Any conversation that took place as people ate and drank around a fire, obviously didn't form part of the eating itself. However, as I've said, extra-to-food perceiving and sensing would have contributed to the overall experience that even a person of such primitive means sustained whilst eating. In other words, whether a person

literally eats or figuratively eats, the person still hosts an accompanying full-blown mode of experiencing. In the case of literal eating, the food contributes to full-blown experiencing which exceeds the contribution of the food itself. In the case of figurative consumption, since everything constitutes potential 'food', and nothing remains off-piste, [or off the menu] consumption becomes all-pervasive. And, as such, any experience one has, necessarily, derives from the 'intake', or sensory registration, of something or other, even if one nominally 'takes in' what already resides within oneself, such as one's thinking and feeling. However, human beings do not simply perceive, take in, and consume, they 'do', express, and produce. I will deal with this topic in chapter 10, in which I focus on the issue of regulating 'expression'.

6.8 Concluding

I have mentioned some of the ways in which access to rooms, bodies/minds, and 'props' gets controlled by someone or other. In the case of securing access to the rooms in the first instance, the receptionists at the School of Management functioned as gatekeepers. For the duration of my four-hour tenure I became the acting-gatekeeper, if you will. If, after setting-up the room, I wanted to leave the room for any reason, I could use my activated student card to lock and unlock the door, thereby ensuring that no one could steal my camcorder in my absence. Similarly, individuals within the research environment (voluntarily or involuntarily) regulated what physically entered their bodies and what physically left their bodies via excretion and exhalation for example. Only Bridie [conversation No. 4] ate during a session; she ate some apple pieces between 01:28:00 and 01:37:00 on the DVD playback counter. I also suggested that, for the individuals within the research environment, clothing functions as a 'skin' which restricts

visual access, by the other (and the self), to particular parts of their respective bodies. One can see this as analogous to curtains and wallpapers which stop passersby from peering into a room or which cover the raw surface of a wall, respectively.

The term 'access', when used as a transitive verb, implies the regulation of access to something or other, in this case to: rooms, bodies, texts, 'props' and the like. This, in turn, connotes the notion of archetypal consumption, since both eating and drinking entail putting substances from outside the body-container, into the body-container. The container metaphor thus underpins archetypal consumption. However, by bringing into question a specifically input/intake orientation and by moving towards an interest in the regulation of two-way, interactive, traffic between nested 'containers', as in human communication, we can begin to free ourselves from a 'consumption' orientation; we can begin to think in terms of dynamic interactivity rather than nominally focusing on 'incoming' phenomena and perceptions.

Chapter 7: Configuration

7.1 The Main Body of the Chapter

> *While many of the ideas in this paper are pilfered from other sources (see long list of references), the author is proud to assert that precisely these words have never been written in precisely this order.*
>
> - Anthony Patterson (2010, p. 57)

Patterson, here, gently subverts the academic convention of making an originality/value-claim regarding one's own work. In particular he focuses on, what Hanks (1989, p. 95) refers to as, a particular "configuration of signs". Von Eckartsberg (2010, p. 256) makes a similar point to Patterson, but with reference to the rough and tumble of three-dimensional human actions and interactions:

> The individual moves through his world bodily, and thus traces a certain unique path through the existing geographical landscapes of his universe. […] His bodily path can be traced on various geographical maps. In mapping the path of the body-in-motion, we obtain a basic record of an individual's body-movement through space, which anchors all other possible experimental happenings. Such a mapping constitutes a basic existential fact about a person.

Echoing Patterson's opening quote, a person may thus proudly assert that precisely these movements and actions have never occurred in precisely this order, in these precise locations. Von Eckartsberg (2010, p. 256) continues:

> Using language, I engage in a crucial translation of the original event, which becomes accessible only indirectly as pointed to by means of language. At present, there seems to be no other possible way of access to experience except

> through some form of communication that constitutes, already, a translation of the original events.

Following this line of thought, there exist experiential phenomena which predate their translation into palpable-to-others (written, spoken, etc.,) forms. Just as we can refer to the particular word-order of an academic article as unique, and as a body's movement through space-time may prove unrepeatable in all of its details, so too, an individual's 'inner' goings-on (his/her thinking and feeling) proceeds idiosyncratically, privately, and ongoingly - broken only by periods of dreamless sleep.

Using Laszlo's (1973, p. 379) musically-related distinction - between, "composer, performer, and listener" - I want to invite us to view the 'live' research conversation as, itself, a unique configuration of elements, comprising of contingently-articulated utterances and associated bodily positioning, within a strategically-organized physical environment. Given the absence of scripted questions during the research conversations, the communication emerged, improvised-jazz-like, from the participants of each distinct situation.

It seems crucial, for me, to characterise each 'live' research conversation as co-composed, co-performed, and co-perceived by the two participants occupying particular space-time coordinates. In an important sense, each individual could act 'on' the emergent 'music' and the performance thereof. We can thus think of the 'live' research conversation as a work-in-progress.

When I subsequently viewed the audio-visual recording, of each research conversation, I became a listener/viewer and a concurrent note-maker. Unless and until I objectified my noticings, they

remained tacit and thus private. Unlike a computer hard-drive that potentially saves all of a computer's goings-on in a recoverable format, for posterity, a person's thinking and feeling exists only fleetingly, unless preserved in some sort of death-defying medium. ["The faintest ink is better than the most retentive memory." (Origin unknown)] The crucial question becomes, How does one arrive at a configuration of words (or other symbols) that accords with the 'configuration' of one's inner goings-on, or one's sought-after state? T. S. Eliot (1921, p. 92) referred to this as the search for an "objective correlative":

> […] in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

This leads us to the heart of the writing process. One articulates some words; one registers the impact of those very words on one's own 'system'. One's momentary evaluation of one's emerging work then informs immediately-subsequent expression - for better or for worse.

We have, then, an interrelating of geographical (often artefact-imbued) contexts, and people (each with their 'inner' experiencing, along with their witting and/or unwitting expressive conduct). How does one encompass such complexity when communicating?

Laszlo (1970, p. 294) distinguishes between, "self-stabilizing through manipulation [of environmental variables] and self-organizing through adaptation [of one's inner reference levels]". Thus a person can act on environmental variables in order to bring his/her sensing of those variables into line with his/her reference

value(s). Alternatively s/he may, sooner or later, develop modified norms, preferences, and/or tastes, such that his/her expectations get met without his/her having to change environmental variables. In short, a person may change aspects of the world beyond his/her skin as a means of regulating his/her current experiencing; [Fig. 7.1] alternatively, s/he may work on his/her own 'infrastructure' - his/her own 'inner' points of reference - as a means of regulating what s/he experiences [Fig. 7.2].

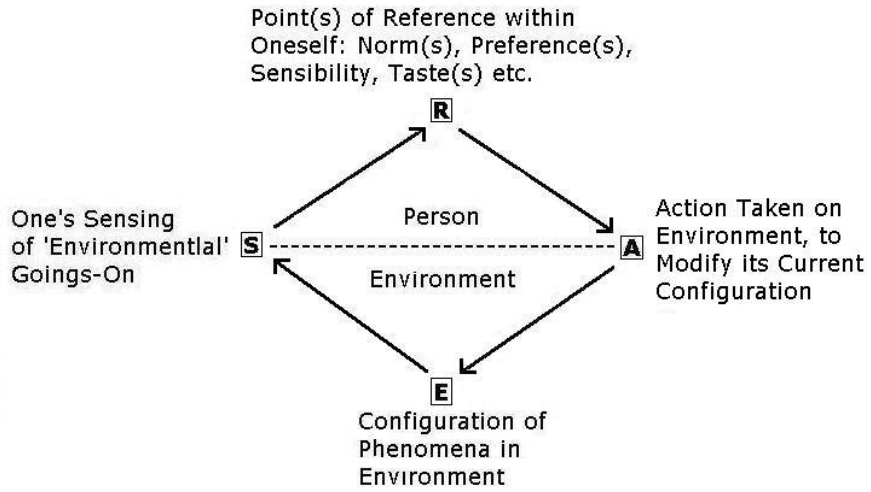


Figure 7.1 Experiaction Loop (Developed from Laszlo [1970] and [1973])

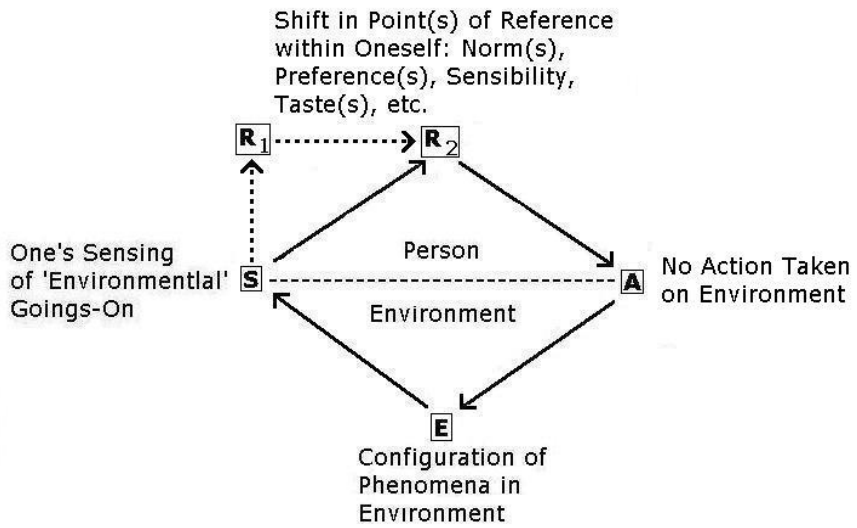


Figure 7.2 Experiaction Loop with Shift in Reference Value(s) (Developed from Laszlo [1973])

Laszlo (1973, p. 381) calls the process of reference-level-adjustment "learning". He writes:

> […] we shall not enter into the problem of how [R_2] is derived from [R_1]. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that all learning is held to be a form of creative response to challenges in the experience of the subject […] an exploratory process which leads to the re-examination of one's existing […] constructs and evolves, if necessary, new constructs […].

Inter-experiaction, then, potentially involves two (or more) people, each harbouring an idiosyncratic assemblage of reference values. Thus, what each person senses, interprets, and acts on, will depend on his/her prevailing points of reference. This basic model, coupled with each individual's potential for 'learning' [Fig. 7.2] provides a way of representing the complexities that may arise in human inter-experiaction.

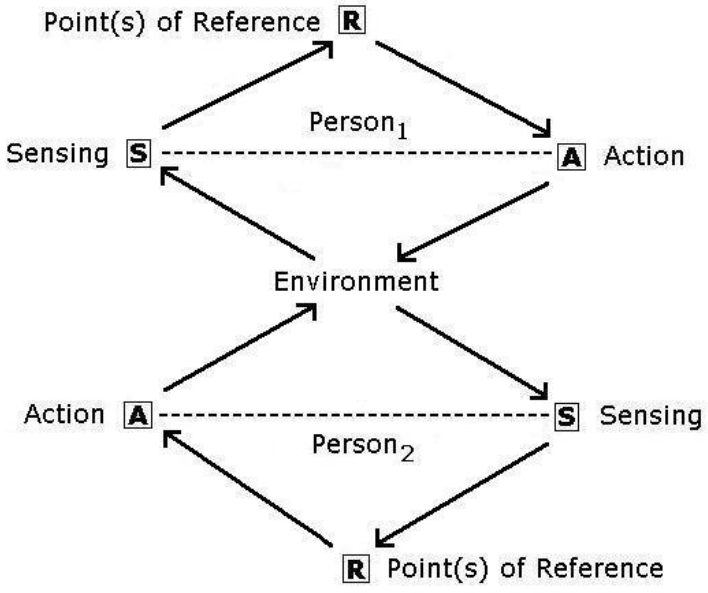


Figure 7.3 Inter-Experiaction (Developed from Laszlo [1973])

Stern (1998, p. 5) reminds us that, "[…] all narratives are 'made' or created in the sense that they impose structure on a multiplicity of details." The subjective report may thus belie the complexity of the lived event. The film critic Andrew Sarris (1971) points to this difficulty when he writes:

> It is our misfortune as film critics that we must discuss a film one-thing-at-a-time when on the screen so many things are happening and reverberating at the same time.

What applies to movies also applies to moment-to-moment experiencing, where simultaneous goings-on don't readily lend themselves to concurrent description. As Biró (1982, p. 24) puts it, "thought contains simultaneously what in speech occurs consecutively". A transcript of an audio-visual recording, for example, contains written representations of verbal expressions, and actions, but clearly does not 'contain' experiencing itself. At best a transcript or audio-visual recording comprises of representations of experiencing and actions, which may 'resonate' within a sympathetic reader/viewer. Parts of the 'live' research conversation evade capture via the audio-visual recording, just as parts of the non-verbal experiencing of research participants do not find their way into verbal reports. I must use words, and/or other symbolic means, in spite of the fact that these means, at best, *represent* experiencing - stand for experiencing - which the hearer/reader must, in the end, bring to life in his/her own being, in the form of his/her own responsive experiencing.

Research convention ushers me towards 'the data' to find support for my five themes. However, the five themes derived from a set of keywords. The keywords 'came out of' my head, top-of-the-mind-style, shortly after I had read my uni-log - a distilled selection of (a) what I had noticed whilst watching recordings of the research

conversations, (b) what I noticed as I re-read the notes and meta-notes, made whilst viewing the audio-visual recordings and note-reading respectively. The uni-log, in question, followed several generations down the line from the original live research conversations. I began with two viewing-logs for each research conversation. I then went on to create the three composite viewing-logs, before finally, creating the uni-log. My keywords thus arose from an engagement with several successive types of data, addressed in different three-dimensional contexts. My thinking regarding the, subsequent, development of the keywords into five themes also developed through, for example, reading about homeostasis [Cannon (1939), Fletcher (1938), Stagner (1977),] and the cybernetic negative feedback model [Ashby (1957), Carver and Scheier (1982), Powers (2005)] and through conversing with peers. Rather than viewing 'data' as residing solely in material 'texts', a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed perspective led me to consider my own 'inner' goings-on, during the various stages of the research process, as relevant phenomena. Miller and Glassner (2004, p. 127) allude to this kind of complexity:

> Numerous levels of representation occur from the moment of "primary experience" to the reading of researchers' textual presentation of findings, including the level of attending to the experience, telling it to the researcher, transcribing and analysing what is told, and the reading.

I cannot escape the conviction that my 'data' potentially comprises of all that I notice as a researcher. Even when I quote the exact words used by a research volunteer, I thus include something that I noticed whilst watching the recording of a research conversation. Similarly, when I bring together quotes from different volunteers (and from myself) I do so according to what strikes me as interesting and/or relevant, according to my line of argument. In

full-blown experiaction the 'data' may comprise of any aspect(s) of my current 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'.

I set out to study 'consumption experiences', only to find myself re-conceptualising the notion of 'consumption experiences' in the light of my review of the literature, seen through a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed lens. As a consequence of this inquiry I found myself exploring the implications of this re-conceptualisation of 'consumption experiences' for the process of data analysis per se. When the concept of consuming stretches to include sensory 'noticing', 'becoming aware of', and 'experiencing', then what applies, for example, to the consumption of movies, begins to apply to the consumption of conversations, and indeed manifold other phenomena. Just as, when viewing movies, we can, and do, attend to phenomena outside of the movie, so too our experiencing whilst engaged with research 'data' may exceed data-specific noticings. This comparison seems especially apt given that the DVD recordings of research conversations resemble movies, both in terms of their audio-visual format and the fact that research-conversation-recordings last for around the same amount of time as an average movie. If I really want to address full-blown experiaction-in-situ, then I can't ignore the structural complexities sketched in this chapter.

* * *

> I will use asterisks to denote a shift to a different temporal/spatial/attitudinal realm.
>
> - Ronai (1995, p. 397)

* * *

Having gained access to a research room I proceeded to arrange the room's contents to suit my purposes and expectations. In particular I stacked all the superfluous tables and chairs around the outer edges of each room. I left two chairs which I positioned in front of the screen where I projected the pre-research-conversation movie. I left another two chairs which I positioned against an uncluttered section of wall, with a tripod-mounted-camcorder trained upon them, where the post-movie-viewing research conversation took place. I thus set up a movie-viewing area and a separate post-movie-viewing-research-conversation zone. I removed any residual litter from the room. Alia, my first volunteer, an experienced senior lecturer, said (05:04), "I thought, when I came in, that it was all looking very professional and well set up, very organised." Ruby, my third volunteer, a mature student, when asked during her post-research-conversation-monitoring-discussion, with my supervisor Nancy, "What recommendations would you give about how to improve the process?" said:

> […] the room itself was quite, sort of, cold and… not as in temperature-cold, but possibly a, sort of, more… possibly a… I'd say probably a smaller room, a bit more, sort of, comfortable.

Here we see two different volunteers, confronted with essentially the same research setting, and yet noticing different aspects of it and making different value judgements concerning the setting. Alia spoke from the perspective of a professional lecturer. I suggest that Ruby may have had in mind the suitability of the room in relation to the nature of the conversation that we had had. For example, at one point during our conversation (No. 3, 42:35) Ruby said:

> I think I'm probably using it as a bit of a counselling session as well. [Laughing] I try… I'm one of those people who tends

> to, sort of, bottle everything up. I try not to talk about myself.

Perhaps Ruby found it incongruous having a heart-to-heart conversation in an impersonal, institutional, and somewhat cavernous space; whereas Alia made her, "all looking very professional", comment at the start of our conversation, before she knew what would follow. However, Ruby, when seeking to account for the fact that she had shared certain personal information with me said:

> […] I think a lot of it, as well, is because it's, sort of, more in the name of research. And if people aren't gonna give you the honest truth, there's no point you conducting any research. This is where it's very different from a normal, everyday situation. I feel that I need to be totally… I need to be honest. And I've been as honest as I can possibly be […].

Here Ruby invokes a 'research' frame of reference to explain her, out-of-character, level of self-revelation within the research setting. Ruby cited 'counselling' and 'research', both 'frames of reference' which sanction, or even require, a more candid mode of being. For Ruby, "normal, everyday situation[s]" do not raise expectations of a heightened level of honesty. Furthermore, Ruby cited the fact that 'she will probably never meet me again' as giving her licence to speak freely. When speaking with Nancy, my supervisor, during the post-research-conversation session, Ruby said:

> […] because I didn't know him [Michael], I've never even seen him around campus, so I felt pretty comfortable knowing that I probably wouldn't see him again much. So yeh, I think the majority of people will open up more to strangers than people they know.

In sum, Ruby identified three factors contributing to her own uncharacteristic candour during our research conversation: (1) she

found herself consciously, yet spontaneously, using the situation as means of expressing some of her 'issues'. This linked, in Ruby's mind, with (2) the freedom of talking with a stranger [me] with whom she didn't have an ongoing relationship and would probably not meet again. And (3) Ruby sees research conversations as necessarily entailing honest communication, since anything less than honestly, from her, would undermine the value of any subsequent findings. Matt (conversation No. 6) makes a similar point, in the context of explaining why he had gone to some trouble to challenge a point I'd made earlier in our conversation (42:56):

> […] I suppose if after this I then […] thought back on this and thought, 'Well hang on a minute, I think we were completely misunderstanding what we were meaning', then I would… I would, sort of, feel that this hadn't got as much value as it could have had, in that you would have thought that this had led… you would have gained particular things from this discussion, which then, if I thought that's what you were gaining I would have said, 'Well hang on, that's not what I meant… what we were taking about'. So, you know, you would have then based some sort of academic findings - in a tiny, tiny way, 'cause you're doing masses of other stuff, but in a tiny way - on something that actually I didn't feel, would, you know, would, looking backwards, have been the discussion that we would have had.

It seems clear from these two examples that Ruby and Matt both saw honesty and accuracy, respectively, as necessary aspects of the research process and that they used these criteria to warrant and to account for their non-workaday behaviour within the research setting. In other words, the 'research' frame of reference, for the individuals cited, legitimized and warranted behaviour which they would not practice in everyday life; the expectations and parameters, relating to conversation, shifted in a 'research' context, when compared to, say, a 'social' context. Here we can see the cybernetic notion of 'reference value(s)' in action. Rather than

perceptions 'entering' a human-being-with-a-clean-slate [tabula rasa] the perceiving gets benchmarked against an existing-before-latest-perceiving infrastructure. This comparing of 'incoming' with 'already-in' constitutes what cybernetic theorists call the comparison/benchmarking stage of the negative feedback loop. The degree of mismatch between these 'patterns', putatively drives the perceiving individual's perceived-mismatch-reducing behaviour.

Erving Goffman (1974, p. 10) employs the term "frames of reference". Berger, in his (1985) Foreword to Goffman's Frame Analysis (1974, p. xiii) writes, "[…] what goes on in interaction is governed by usually unstated rules or principles […]". Goffman (1974, p. 25) goes on to write, "during any one moment of activity, an individual is likely to apply several [such] frameworks." A person's currently-employed reference values (or 'frames of reference') provide him/her with a standard of comparison against which to benchmark his/her perceptions of current states of affairs which s/he find him/herself engaged in.

The fact that, as a 'researcher', I observed an ethical code and promised confidentiality and anonymity to volunteers, added to the formalised, and extra-ordinary, rules-of-engagement which pertained when I engaged in qualitative research. Indeed, without peer-reviewed, ethics-approval clearance I could not have embarked on the series of video-recorded research conversations. The fact that the first three volunteers met with one of my supervisors, subsequent to their respective research conversations with me, helped in my gaining ethics approval for my project. This process ensured that my supervisors, and the volunteers themselves, found the research-conversation process fit for purpose and gave rise to no contraindications. This safeguard helped to foster confidence in the project, in those people charged with

authorising it, along with, we assume, the volunteers involved in the stage-one research conversations. Indeed, on the 27th May 2011, one of the two anonymous ethics-approval reviewers wrote:

> The two stage approach to constructing the research conversation process allows oversight from the researcher's supervisors and adds a further check on any ethical issues arising.

Here then, the particular organization, or configuration, of the research design, itself, helped us to convince the ethics-approval-gatekeepers of the merits of our plan of action. Thus the regulable variable of 'configuration' may pertain to manifold instances of the strategic structuring of 'elements'. The configuring may apply to three-dimensional environments, people, or two dimensional texts. In addition to configuring rooms, we might, for example, reduce our food intake, and begin exercising, in order to reconfigure our own body - thus bringing 'it' into a closer accord with our 'preferred' vision of self. I acted on the research design in order to actualise my wish to gain ethics approval for my project. In this instance certain configurations of elements - marks on paper - will satisfy gatekeepers as the gatekeepers employ a set of criteria (reference values) designed to weed-out shoddy research practice.

To recap: I had arranged two sets of two chairs - one set in front of the movie-viewing screen, in one part of the room; the other set placed against a wall, with a camcorder trained thereon, elsewhere in the same room, where the post-movie-viewing research conversation took place. The distance between chairs, the distance from the chairs to the movie-viewing screen and the camcorder, respectively, and how this configuration related to the stacked, redundant chairs and tables, around the edges of each room,

together constituted the floor-plan of the elements in each room. Stimson (1986, pp. 652-653) cites Edward Hall, saying that Hall:

> […] argues that in North American culture there are four major distances between people, the intimate, personal, social and public. […] Intimate distance goes from actual contact to about 18 inches. Personal space (from 18 inches to up to about four feet), is the usual protective sphere that is maintained between self and others […]. Social distance, from four to twelve feet, is the common distance for people attending a casual social gathering, for people who work together, and at the further end is the distance at which impersonal business is conducted. [… At public distance (from twelve feet and above) …] everything must be exaggerated […] (think of the importance of pronounced gestures to orators and other public figures - Hitler's gesticulations, the Queen's wave, the Pope's blessing).

Although these distances may differ somewhat amongst different individuals and cultures, and whilst no explicit rules get laid down, when configuring the research room, prior to the arrival of the volunteers, such implicit societal norms [reference values] would have informed my sense of how I should space the chairs. I consciously made this decision on the basis of what felt right, to me, in terms of a comfortable proximity. I trust that I have a, somewhat, shared sense of social-proximity-norms, at least in terms of the British norms which I grew up with. I had to balance this with the pragmatic limitation of what I could fit into the (literal) frame of the camcorder's viewing screen. So, although 'I', ostensibly, regulated the room, my actions conformed to pre-existing, society-wide expectations which insidiously regulated my behaviour, by virtue of which distances felt 'comfortable'.

As already mentioned in my literature review, in movie-making, and in the theatre, some people employ the term 'mise-en-scène'. Gibbs (2002, p. 5) defines the term mise-en-scène, used in relation

to film, as, "the contents of the frame and the way they are organised". According to the *Encarta World English Dictionary* the word 'ordonnance' pertains to, "the general arrangement of elements in architecture and in works of art and literature". These definitions of the terms 'mise-en-scène' and 'ordonnance' overlap; the term 'mise-en-scène' pertains to both the contents *and* their organisation, whereas the term 'ordonnance' pertains specifically to the arrangement of elements and not to the elements per se. You will note that, what I have called the 'configuration' of elements within the research setting constitutes a more widely-applicable variant of the more specialist terms 'mise-en-scène' and 'ordonnance'. Thus, the movie that I screened prior to each research conversation had its own compositional characteristics. And yet, like the Russian-doll notion of nested containers, the screened movie existed within the broader architectural setting of the School of Management. Thus we had the mise-en-scène of the movie, nested within the encompassing ordonnance of the research setting. Likewise, the research room, itself, sat within a building, and the building, itself, within its grounds etc. This leads me to the heart of my thesis. Research-context-embedded individuals, each dynamically attentive, may momentarily alight on any aspect of a multidimensional mobile 'composition'. I have previously referred to this 'composition' as the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' that a person resides within and co-constitutes. Perls *et al* (1951, p. 228) called this 'composition' the "organism/environment field". Lewin (1952, pp. 238-240) refers to the subset of the organism/environment field - as perceived by the individual - as the individual's "life space", namely, what s/he perceives, both within and outside of him/herself.

One need not look very far to find examples of people with, what we might call, 'divided attention'. Bella (conversation No. 5, 04:15) said:

> […] when I was watching the film I was thinking, 'Oh help', I'm not very observant, I know that. I haven't got a very good memory. Em, 'I hope I'm not going to have to, em, give too much detail about what was in the film'.

Similarly Matt (conversation No. 6, 57:29), when talking about watching the movie, said:

> I was aware of you, wondering whether you were watching me [Matt can hardly see and has a guide dog] to see how I was reacting to it. And at one point I discovered that I was sitting back… I was actually a bit cold so I was, sort of, doing that [Matt demonstrates hugging himself].

The last two quotations point to the notion of 'wayward' 'noticings' - how, whist ostensibly watching a movie, we may attend to, and get-up-to, other things. We may think of the whole of our moment-to-moment 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' as a container, of sorts, which houses all that we consciously know and notice in the emergent, leading-edge of awareness and action. A cybernetic perspective points to a person's 'internal' reference values as the context-specific standards which inform his/her moment-by-moment choices. For example, earlier I suggested that a 'research conversation context' encouraged a greater-than-usual expectation (and actualization) of honesty and accuracy, for the two volunteers cited.

I asked Paul (conversation No. 8), at the start of our conversation (01:11), "[…] knowing that you were going to be filmed today, did that influence what you wore?" After a pause Paul answered, "I would say a bit, but not necessarily, actually, because I do [pause]

dress well even without that presentation." Paul thus concedes that the impending research event had influenced what he chose to wear that day. But he qualifies this by saying that he has high-standards of personal presentation irrespective of the particular event in question. And Matt (conversation No. 6, ♎ 01:08:30) said:

> I did choose, this morning, to wear, [pause] you know, something that I felt comfortable in, but was smart - smart's not the word because I never associate jeans with being smart - but that felt presentable, in an academic environment or whatever. […] I knew that I was going to be filmed, so I suppose that had some slight bearing on asking [his wife] for something that was presentable. [Matt can not see very well and had a guide-dog with him during the research conversation.] […] [♎ 01:12:00] I'll tell you what I'm communicating: purely the fact that [pause] it's strange, because when you boil it down, all I was doing this morning, when I made those decisions, was making decisions that I thought would be appropriate for the various settings that I would be in today […]. I wanted to avoid, "My goodness, what's he wearing that for?" […] I just didn't want to stick out as […] wearing something that was inappropriate. So, to me it was about that, rather than positively wanting to portray a particular thing.

Matt thus stressed that although he didn't want to portray a specific image through his choice of clothes, he did endeavour to dress appropriately and fittingly. He didn't want to stand out. Paul and Matt both showed signs of having 'made an effort', more-or-less adhering to the dress-code that they judged as fitting for an academic-research-setting. In doing so, they enacted and upheld certain personally-conceived reference standards in relation to self and academia.

7.2 Concluding

In this chapter I have sought to show that an individual within a research setting can personalise the configuration of the elements

within that setting, relative to his/her reference value(s). S/he can introduce new phenomena into that context, and can change his/her appearance and position within the overall dynamic composition. Importantly, from the perspective of the individual, his/her perceptual platform [his/her awareness] co-constitutes whatever s/he construes. His/her innate registering/sensing 'equipment' conditions and informs the nature of his/her responses. For example, s/he cannot see out of the back of his/her head whilst simultaneously looking straight ahead - s/he has an inherently restricted field of vision. Thus, in order to see out of a window, for example, s/he may need to walk in the direction of the window first.

The notion and practice of configuring pervades the research process, all the way to completing a chapter such as this one. Here, whilst writing, my operative reference values take the form of the internalized academic and aesthetic standards against which I benchmark my own written output. The fact of successive drafts points to the idea that I frequently fail to manifest those standards in the early stages of writing. My incremental 'polishing' gradually brings the document more into line with what I feel comfortable associating with.

Having first accessed a room, I then configured the furniture/props and myself, and together we [the research volunteer and me] fine-tuned 'levels' such as: amounts, durations, heights, intensities, and volumes, within the room, its contents, and ourselves - the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Levels

8.1 Meta-Analysis

When charged with 'analysing the data' I found myself unable to simply get on with the job. I needed to work through some theoretical issues en route to finding a way of doing the analysis - a way that made sense in the light of a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed orientation. I call the opening section of this chapter 'Meta-Analysis' - a necessary-for-me process of working towards an answer to the question: What does it mean, for me, to analyse data, and how might I go about doing so? Although one may view this as a methodology question; I found myself facing it *during* the process of trying to write my 'findings'. Seen from a phenomenological perspective, whatever dominates one's current field of consciousness constitutes one's most pressing 'data'; exploring *that* 'data', arguably, constitutes a relevant form of 'data analysis'.

* * *

> *Only* experience is evident. Experience is the *only* evidence. […] Social phenomenology is the science of my own and others' *experience*. It is concerned with the relation between my experience of you and your experience of me. That is, with inter-experience. It is concerned with your behaviour and my behaviour *as I experience it*, and your and my behaviour *as you experience it*. […] Since your and their experience is invisible to me as mine is to you and them, I seek to make evident to the others, through their experience of my behaviour, what I infer of your experience, through my experience of your behaviour.
>
> This is the crux of social phenomenology.
>
> - Laing (1967, pp. 16-17)

Von Eckartsberg's (1971, p. 373) term 'inter-experiaction' seems an improvement on Laing's 'inter-experience', since the term 'inter-experiaction' makes the inseparability of 'experience' and 'action' explicit, while in Laing's term, 'inter-experience', the inseparability of experience and action remains, at best, implicit. That said, if we accept the substance of Laing's opening quotation then, our moment-to-moment experiencing as researchers - and, indeed, as human beings generally - constitutes our primary, indeed our only, source of 'data'. Denzin (2013, p. 354) writes:

> […] the politics and political economy of evidence, also known as data, is not a question of evidence or no evidence. It is rather a question of who has the power to control the definition of evidence, who defines the kinds of materials that count as evidence, who determines what methods best produce the best forms of evidence, whose criteria and standards are used to evaluate quality evidence? The politics of data, the politics of evidence cannot be separated from the ethics of evidence.

And Lincoln (2002, pp. 5, 6) fine-tunes the distinction between 'evidence' and 'data':

> Qualitative evidence and qualitative data are not necessarily the same thing. Although data and evidence are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing, they do not necessarily mean the same thing. Data may be merely information. Evidence, however, is data brought to bear on specific questions, theories or experiences. Evidence is data with a purpose. […] Evidence represents data to which have been added a layer - or multiple layers - of interpretation and rhetorical strategy. […] Data […] is not evidence until two things happen: first, someone recognizes it as data, and second, an inquirer subjects it to some form of systematic analysis, which turns it into evidence directed towards some question or argument.

Unless and until a human being witnesses and engages with some form of 'data', then, that data remains 'potential evidence'.

According to Lincoln, the term 'evidence' implies the mobilization of data in the service of some human purpose or goal. Any empirical phenomena that I employ as I construct my thesis thus serve as evidence to further my cause, namely, presenting a coherent, persuasive alternative to the binary consumption/production concept. If experience and action go hand-in-hand, as experiaction, and human being, itself, constitutes our only source of data/evidence, then data filtered through (and serving) human beings takes the form of complex processes rather than stable texts. Parts of the process of experiacting take the form of observable actions. We may attempt to objectify/reify our experiential goings-on through manifold acts of representation. As von Eckartsberg (2010, pp. 255, 257) writes:

> All aspects of our life are given to us in our immediate experience of them. […] However, personal experience can be expressed through language or other forms of representation. This expressed record - commonly referred to as subjective report - can serve as legitimate data for analysis.

The audio-visual recordings of the research conversations that I conducted, or the notes and transcripts I made whilst watching them, do not, in themselves, constitute my data; my experiaction whilst viewing or reading them, respectively, also constitutes experiential data. I must, wittingly or unwittingly, symbolise my experiencing in order to make it somewhat palpable to others via *their* experience of my expressive output. I do not experience audio-visual recordings, and the notes made whilst watching them, in and of themselves, directly, but always in the form of my embodied and contextualised experiaction as I engage with them. My experiencing necessarily exceeds simply an experience OF the audio-visual recordings, or viewing-logs, and inevitably constitutes an embodied experiencing that I host WHILST engaging with the

audio-visual recording or viewing-log, within a particular physical setting. An experience OF something implies experiencing solely derived from, and dedicated to, a particular stimulus; experiencing sustained WHILST engaging with something or other leaves the, proverbial, window open to other, extra-to-target-stimulus, goings-on.

I suggest, therefore - supported by Laing, and von Eckartsberg - that we can *only* know 'data' (in the conventional sense of recordings, viewing-logs, and the like) via our experiencing WHILST attending to such 'data'. And because the experiencing that we host, concurrent with our exposure to conventional data, exceeds simply an experience OF that data, then our whilst-addressing-data experience will comprise of experiential 'evidence' which doesn't necessarily directly relate to the extra-personal 'data' except, perhaps, in terms of its concurrence in time and its proximity in space as we address 'data-in-the-conventional-sense'. This less-than-immaculate-consumption of focal texts[3] - where we don't have a dedicated-to-a-specific-text experience, but rather experiact whilst associating with the focal text - occurs similarly in (a) the pre-conversation-movie-viewing context, (b) during the research conversation itself, and (c) during the viewing of the audio-visual recordings thereof. Thus we never have an exclusive experience OF someone or something; we always sustain experiencing WHILST encountering that particular someone or something, in a particular existential context.

This discussion points me towards the idea that we only ever 'know' our own experiencing. This experiencing incorporates our own concomitant behaviour which, itself, contributes to the experiencing

[3] The term 'consumption', here, functions as a synonym for the terms, 'becoming-aware-of', 'experiencing', 'noticing', 'perceiving', and 'sensing'.

that we sustain. This combined experiaction, because of its necessarily embodied and situated character, must exceed a notionally direct and dedicated perception of a target phenomenon. By a 'target' phenomenon I mean the phenomenon from which an event takes its name e.g., 'eating', 'movie-viewing', or 'data-analysing'. We necessarily apprehend target phenomena via our sensory/perceptual processes. By definition, we can not perceptually-grasp target phenomena in an unmediated fashion. Furthermore, a target phenomenon competes for our attention with other phenomena that co-constitute our 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'.

8.2 Experience as Our Only Evidence

> It is tempting, when undertaking ethnographic fieldwork or some similar piece of qualitative research, to treat observational and oral data (such as may be derived from interviews or recorded interactions) as the primary data, and any documentary materials as secondary. […] We would urge that documentary materials should be regarded as data in their own right.
>
> - Atkinson and Coffey (2004, p. 59)

Seen in the light of a phenomenological orientation, it becomes questionable to conceive of the research process as comprising of a hierarchy of 'texts', as suggested in the last quote. The data available to us in the form of our immediate experiencing, necessarily constitutes our most 'primary' data - indeed, as Laing said (in the opening quote of this chapter), our "*only* evidence".

8.3 Some Implications

I now need to identify the practical implications, of this phenomenological way of thinking, for 'data analysis'. Each research-conversation setting provided a context in which two

individuals (a volunteer and me) could watch an 18-minute-long movie, and then subsequently converse [inter-experiact] for upward of 1½ hours. I have an audio-visual recording of each of the ten research conversations I conducted. I think of the audio-visual recordings as movie-like texts. And, as I've said, the experiencing that I sustained WHILST viewing these audio-visual recordings exceeded simply an experience OF those texts in themselves. Similarly, when reading back the notes I'd made whilst watching the audio-visual recordings, my experiencing exceeded simply having experiences OF reading notes. Again, I sustained full-blown experiaction WHILST note-reading, not simply experiences OF note-reading. You will note that by nominalising the *process* of 'experiencing' and thus turning experiencing into 'experiences' [nouns/objects/things] we objectify our inner goings-on. This nominalising move enables marketers, for example, to sell us a 'once-in-a-life-time experience'. We do not find marketers offering us moment-to-moment 'experiencing', since this, more fuzzily-bounded process, entails 'stuff' not provided via the marketed product/service. Our idiosyncratic, momentary experiencing, whilst consuming something or other, exceeds a packaged 'experience' that marketers may, nominally, seek to sell us.

Most importantly, as one tries to represent the experiaction occurring during each successive engagement with different varieties of 'data',[4] one produces still more conventional data, in the form of experience-representing texts. I need to distinguish here between, on the one hand, a multiplicity of texts - as posited in the last quote (Atkinson and Coffey) - and, on the other hand, a series of self/environment contexts (or 'fields'), the selective-perception of

[4] I put the term 'data' in inverted commas here to indicate data in the conventional sense of discrete 'texts', as distinct from the field-theoretical sense of data which extends to the 360° intra- and extra-personal experiactional goings-on.

which sponsors moment-to-moment experiential/phenomenological data. On the basis of my own experiencing, I note that much experiential data gets jettisoned, and/or slips through the representational net, in the course of data analysis. The very concepts of 'data' and 'data analysis' frame the modus operandi of the researcher, encouraging him/her to discount, as irrelevant, non-data-related evidence or noticings. I can see the potential for including, in reports, the kind of material that ordinarily gets omitted; this in the interests of presenting more-faithful-to-lived-experiencing representations of the research process. Here I mean that, if one focuses on the goings-on 'in' an audio-visual recording of a research conversation, one can easily overlook, say, the mild headache that co-constitutes the whilst-watching-the-recording experiencing. And yet, that headache forms an integral aspect of the researcher's whilst-doing-data-analysis 'experiaction'. But if one conceptualises one's data as the audio-visual recording, then the headache one sustains whilst viewing it seems irrelevant. In a sense, watching the research recording head-achingly constitutes a mode of experiaction - a combined doing-feeling process. To focus on the audio-visual data seems, to me, akin to watching a movie and disregarding the rest of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'. For me data analysis can not mean text-dedicated analysis, since this would de-contextualise the text, and thus separate it from the phenomenological matrix in which it exists for me.

Law (2004, p. 2) opens himself to the prospect of a more inclusive approach to researching complex phenomena, such as human experiencing:

> If much of the world is vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn't really have much pattern at all, then

> where does this leave social science? How might we catch some of the realities we are currently missing?

I feel a normative pressure of expectation - to focus on the 'primary' research event - the research conversation - and yet, with my phenomenologist's hat on, and in the light of the foregoing discussion, to do so, exclusively, would constitute a philosophical and a methodological inconsistency.

> There are no prescribed post-positivist ways to analyse qualitative data. […] However, you do need to be systematic and thorough.
>
> - Ryan (2006, pp. 97, 98)

> As an analyst then, you are trying to expose the rules that shape any particular document or account.
>
> - Ryan (2006, p. 104)

I need to lay claim to some of these ideas as I try to make a path for myself through the 'data analysis' thicket.

8.4 Some Further Implications

- If we conceive of our experiactional stream as, itself, data, then the term 'data'; comes to represent a dynamic process rather than concrete, static 'objects' or 'texts'. Thus one can either focus on the notionally objective 'object/text', or on the subjectively-witnessed stream of experiaction that accompanies our association with, and juxtaposition in space-time with, a 'target' phenomenon, amongst others.
- (Question) Why would a student of human experiaction focus on a particular external-to-self focal text as his/her object of study? (Answer) Because that text constitutes the

> conventional 'data' which s/he must analyse. (Q.) But what if his/her current stream of situated experiaction, *itself*, constitutes his/her data - his/her *only* source of data?

It goes something like this: A research volunteer and I watch a movie - we experiact whilst watching the movie. We can see the '-action' part of the other's whilst-watching-a-movie experiaction, but not his/her 'experi-'(encing) per se. Words, gestures, and other expressive forms of representation, function as proxies for what others don't have direct access to, namely, to each expressing person's subjective experiencing. But, according to Krishnamurti (1970, p. 295) we may view our subjective experiencing, itself, as a form of representation:

> When expression becomes all-important because it is pleasurable, satisfying, or profitable, then there is a cleavage between expression and feeling. When the feeling *is* the expression then the conflict doesn't arise, and in this there is no contradiction and hence no conflict.

Thus, if I understand Krishnamurti correctly, we may view our feelings, themselves, as expressive, in that they indicate the state of our self/environment relationship, moment-by-moment. We may thus view 'inner' experiencing, itself, as an organismal accomplishment which provides the host perceiving organism with a dynamic 'status report' of sorts. As Perls *et al* (1951, p. 332) put it:

> […] feelings are not isolated impulses but structured evidence of reality, namely of the interaction of the organism/environment field, for which there is no other direct evidence except feeling […].

I thus start from the position that I don't have unmediated access to other people's experiencing. I rely on representational proxies, which co-sponsor experiencing within me - the observer of the

other. In a 'live' research conversation the process of inter-experiaction prevails. I video-record the conversation, and when I subsequently 'watch' the audio-visual recording and experiact for the duration thereof - I sustain a stream of consciousness, and concomitant behaviour. I can try to represent THAT form of whilst-data-viewing-experiencing - although, as I've said repeatedly, that experiencing will exceed 'an experience' OF (simply) watching an audio-visual recording.

We only ever undergo and undertake a stream of experiaction, which we can plot, as occurring, somewhere in space-time. The experiaction that one hosts in a particular setting arises as a unique contingency of that organism/environment field. Yet we may easily fall into the trap of treating, say, transcripts as 'primary data' when the transcripts, themselves, derive from the audio-visual recordings, which, themselves, derive from the 'live' conversations. We can not find a more 'primary' form of data than our own immediate experiencing per se. 'Becoming-aware-of', 'experiencing', 'noticing', 'perceiving', and 'sensing', occurs in different contexts and in relation to different constellations of phenomena. Yet a text-centric conception of data analysis may easily lead the researcher to disregard the full-blown experiencing that occurs WHILST the researcher associates with specific texts. This brings me to the central issue that I touched on earlier in this chapter.

We talk in terms of experiencing phenomena of different types, such as beverages and landscapes. But do we not simply witness *our* experiencing whilst 'consuming' these beverages and landscapes, rather than the unmediated beverages and landscapes themselves? Yet we distinguish between, say, a living person, a photograph of a living person, and a painting based on the photograph of the living person, and so on. The discussion about these different levels of

representation serves to objectify the various texts - leading to the classifying of texts in terms of a hierarchy of their different 'reality-statuses' (Goffman 1974, p. 82). We start with the 'actual' conversation. We next make notes whilst watching an 'audio-visual representation' of the conversation. Each successive layer, or level, constitutes a representation of a different order. And yet the 'actual' conversation, itself, comprises, at least in part, of participants' verbal representations of their 'actual' experiencing. Does this kind of ordering, or stratification of representations have any use-value? By focusing on the reality-status of different texts, our attention gets diverted away from the compelling idea that we can only ever have here-and-now-experiencing-and-actions. The experiaction-co-sponsoring phenomena - such as audio-visual recordings and transcripts - contribute to our here-and-now goings-on. They do, as in the above example, have different reality-statuses, namely, recordings of 'live' conversations, or 'descriptions' of what I noticed whilst watching the recordings of 'live' conversations; however, the experiaction sustained by the person encountering contextualised phenomena, such as audio-visual recordings and transcripts, necessarily occurs 'live', here-and-now. For some purposes - such as in a legal context - a description of an incident may carry less weight than an audio-visual recording thereof. But conceived from a phenomenological perspective, experiaction always manifests from moment-to-moment, in the context in which one finds oneself. In short, to focus on the reality-status[5] of a particular text diverts attention away from the purported focus of phenomenology, namely a person's moment-to-moment sensing in relation to goings-on in a particular micro-environment. A text-focused analysis thus seems at odds with a field-theoretical, phenomenological orientation.

[5] For example an event may have the status of: 'an actuality', 'a representation of an actuality', or 'a representation of a representation of an actuality' etc.

A transcript derives from a prior audio-visual recording, and an audio-visual recording, itself, derives from an earlier 'live' conversation. The 'live' conversation, in turn, derives from two people inter-experiacting in a particular context. In this way we can trace the whole representational manifold [the full range of research-related 'texts'] back to research-involved-individuals' moment-to-moment streams of experiencing and acting - their idiosyncratic experiacting.

The term 'data' implies some kind of foundational, reliable bedrock on which we can base our 'findings'. Yet what does this data actually comprise of? The term 'data', for me, now stands for (or represents) my/our full-blown moment-to-moment experiaction, as given through my/our individual awareness - a dynamic process rather than a static object or text. We can variously represent our experiencing, but an act of representation does not just chronologically follow a prior instance of experiencing in a linear fashion. The very act of representing something - for example 'speaking one's mind' - may, itself, contribute to the very state of mind that one momentarily seeks to represent. In other words, verbalising one's thinking immediately augments the very stream of consciousness that we seek to verbalise - we can't express our self without modifying the-very-self-we-wish-to-express in the act of expression. The cyclical nature of the negative feedback loop captures this inseparability of perception and expression [Fig. 8.1].

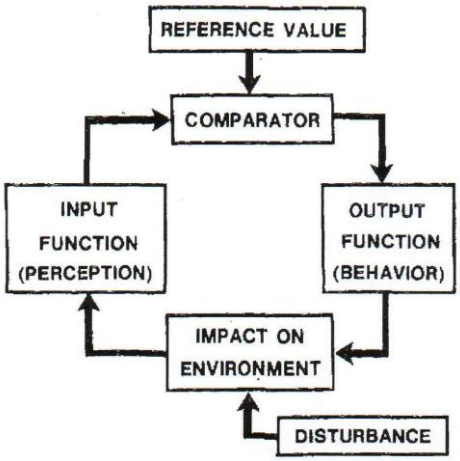


Figure 8.1 Negative Feedback Loop, Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 112)

As one speaks, or writes, or expresses oneself in some other medium, [Output Function] one modifies the 'environment' that one immediately re-senses. In this way, expressing something or other changes the very 'field' that one resides and experiacts within.

Viewed from my most liberal perspective, data analysis constitutes a research-context-transcending, expansive receptivity to my current experiencing, coupled with a will to incorporate as much of that experiencing as practicable within the parameters of academic acceptability. I premise this way of thinking and acting on the understanding that the whole of my experiacting constitutes the very fabric of my life. As R. D. Laing puts it in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, "*Only* experience is evident. Experience is the *only* evidence." To paraphrase and individuate Laing's sentiments: I can *only* ever notice my own experiencing - nothing else. *Only* my own experiencing exists for me. I can only notice the expressivity of others through my own awareness of their expressing. Rogers (1961, pp. 23-24) makes the primacy of personal experience an article of faith:

> *Experience is, for me, the highest authority*. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me.
>
> Neither the Bible nor the prophets - neither Freud nor research - neither the revelations of God nor man - can take precedence over my own direct experience.
>
> My experience is the more authoritative as it becomes more primary, to use the semanticist's term. Thus the hierarchy of experience would be most authoritative at its lowest level. If I read a theory of psychotherapy, and if I formulate a theory of psychotherapy based on my work with clients, and if I also have a direct experience of psychotherapy with a client, then the degree of authority increases in the order in which I have listed these experiences.
>
> My experience is not authoritative because it is infallible. It is the basis of authority because it can always be checked in new primary ways. In this way its frequent error and fallibility is always open to correction.

In the final paragraph of this quote Rogers alludes to the cybernetic self-correcting process. A person's immediate sensings get benchmarked against his/her 'inner' reference levels. The degree of match/mismatch between his/her immediate sensing and his/her reference level(s) sponsors either acceptance of the status quo or environment-modifying corrective action, respectively. [Fig. 8.1, previous page]

In this section I have explored a way of thinking that positions our immediate experiencing as our only basis for knowing. Jerome Bruner, in conversation with Bradd Shore (Shore 1997, pp. 45-46), says:

> Jerome Bruner: […] Now I want to go back to your question about what do I say about the phenomenological character of self. Some say that there is some kind of

> ultimate truth that lies in that immediacy of experience. How can one doubt it?
>
> Bradd Shore: That is really true. It is the anxiety with the tension between the attack on "essentialism" and the call for "experience-near" and deeply embodied ethnography. It provides for an acceptable replacement for essentialism in the form of experiential authenticity.
>
> JB: That's right. There is something about immediacy that is an implicit essentialism […].

Shore's discussion alludes to the distinction between, on the one hand, 'objective' truth, and, on the other hand, 'subjective truth' - what Wenders (1991, p. vi) calls, "the truth of experience". Rogers' (1961) earlier quote (previous page) articulates something akin to Laing's (quoted at the start of this chapter); both make a case for the central importance of experience in human existence. My own thesis leans heavily on this tenet of phenomenological philosophy.

'But you haven't yet analysed the data!' I hear an imaginary critic say. Well, if by this the critic means that I haven't yet cited a selection of utterances and described behaviours attributable to research participants, as evidence that my five themes arose from those representations, then sure, I haven't yet analysed the data. However, in writing these words I have sought to give form to - and to thus resolve - a perceived disequilibrium, within myself, triggered, in part, by the very requirement to 'analyse the data'. This section of this chapter then, itself, constitutes a form of data analysis - at least in accordance with the philosophical orientation that I have here espoused. I have recently found support for this orientation in a paper by Amatucci (2013, pp. 342, 345):

> In traditional qualitative research, data is conceived as an object on which the researcher acts. […] In this article, I theorise data as a verb. […] I have no ambition to tell truths about anyone other than myself. What I see is not what

> others will see. And I won't process those moments - until they reveal themselves - come alive - to me in the writing. Writing is the unfolding present, the only present […].

Fritz Perls (1969, p. 208), a co-founder of Gestalt therapy, expressed a similar sentiment, "I want to write whatever and however pictures and ideas emerge." My reflecting on the process of data-analysis constitutes a form of what Amatucci calls "doing data" - the production and analysis of data occurring concurrently in a 'writing/perceiving/writing-again…' feedback loop.

8.5 Data Analysis in a More Conventional Key

The 'levels' referred to in the title of this chapter denote one of the five categories of 'regulable variables' that I have identified in relation to the experiaction process. I use the term 'levels' when referring to both 'environmental' (exteroceptive) and organismal (interoceptive) states which an individual may sense and, if necessary, act on (consciously or unconsciously) to bring his/her experiencing more into line with his/her goal/preferred state(s). When thinking about 'levels' within research settings, then, I immediately think of lighting, heating, and audio-visual equipment. [Reading this section now (16th March 2013) I recall Claude Bernard's notion of the intra-personal environment - '*le milieu intérieur'* (Cooper 2008, pp. 421-422). According to Bernard:

> […] all the vital mechanisms, varied as they are, have only one object, that of preserving constant the conditions of life in the internal environment […].

These "vital mechanisms" include such processes as breathing, drinking, eating, and excreting.] Interestingly, and in accord with cybernetic theory, the lights, within the research rooms that I used, operated via sensing devices. If, whilst conversing, we stayed

relatively motionless for a length of time, the lights automatically turned off, to save energy. On a number of occasions I had to leave my seat during research conversations in order to trigger the sensor and thus switch the lights back on. Relatedly, Watzlawick *et al* (1968, p. 147) employ, what they call, "the classic analogy of the household furnace thermostat" to explain the homeostatic principle. An electronic sensor monitors the ambient temperature and when the temperature falls below (or exceeds) a pre-set level, the heating system either starts up or shuts down respectively. The negative feedback-loop model [Fig. 8.1, this chapter] underpins the theory of homeostasis. One can think of the term 'negative feedback' as relating to the way in which the feedback process seeks to 'negate', or neutralise, any sensing/perception that deviates from a reference value. Although this, to some readers, may sound overly mechanistic and 'scientific', I would ask you to bear with me as I spell out the implications of applying this model to human being.

Think of the 'input function' as sensory perception. Think of the 'reference value' as a preferred state (or a goal state) that one holds in one's mind as a desirable benchmark state. According to this cybernetic model, one's current perception gets benchmarked against the 'reference value', hence the notion of the 'Comparator' in Figure 8.1. Any discrepancy between the current perception and the reference value results in an 'error signal' - essentially the degree of difference between the perception one currently has and the perception one would ideally prefer to have. If the current perception more-or-less matches the reference value then any negligible error signal does not result in any corrective behaviour. However, a large discrepancy between one's current experience and what one would prefer to experience generates an error signal which drives discrepancy-reducing behaviour. The larger the discrepancy (or error signal) the greater the behavioural

intervention required to close the gap between 'actual' and 'preferred' perception. The 'disturbance', according to this simple diagram, [Fig. 8.1] comes from a place outside of the perceiving organism, and the behavioural output seeks to neutralise the perceptual impact of this 'environmental' fly-in-the-ointment. In the penultimate chapter of this thesis I include a customised version of this model [Fig. 12.2] which takes heed of intra-personal (as well as extra-personal) 'disturbances'.

At the beginning of my conversation with Paul (conversation No. 8), I noted that Paul had wiped his shoes during the screening of the pre-conversation movie. In the light of the negative feedback model, we may view this as Paul monitoring his micro-environment, beyond the edges of the movie-viewing screen, and registering his own dirty shoes. This environmental disturbance sponsored dissonance [or an 'error signal'] when perceived by Paul, and when benchmarked against his preferred ('clean-shoes') reference value. Paul then directly acted on the shoes, cleaning them in the moment, thus bringing his immediate perception of the shoes into line with his 'clean shoes' reference value. Similarly, at 39:23, during our conversation, Paul said he felt cold and proceeded to put on his winter jacket, thereby countering his perception of feeling cold. This latter example, which I will return to in the next chapter, relates to classic homeostasis (Cannon 1939), where the human body has mechanisms which monitor, for example, body-temperature, blood-sugar levels, oxygen levels, and hydration levels, such that the body generates symptoms, such as feeling cold, hungry, breathless, and thirsty when the respective levels drop below those required for sustaining essential life functions. Examples of this kind of physiological self-regulation include research participants: (a) eating an drinking, and (b) taking toilet-breaks during conversations [See chapters 6 and 10 respectively];

adding and shedding layers of clothing [See chapter 9]; and referring to drug taking (medicinal and recreational) which operates on levels of anxiety/depression or inhibition. Examples of the latter include Bob (conversation No. 10), who at Ω 49:21 (uni-log), shared with me that he had felt tortured for most of the time until he began taking lithium, a prescribed mood-altering drug. On a lighter note, Bella (conversation No. 5), at 01:14:44, said:

> Well, I like, I like having alcohol because that… [Pause] it does release my inhibitions [Michael: Sure] I'm… I know I'm very inhibited. And when I've had a few drinks I do… you know, I can be quite silly and do silly things and I love that. I mean, a lot of people don't like to be out of control, but I love to be out of control.
>
> 01:15:12 Michael: Sure.
>
> 01:15:13 Bella: … because I'm in control the rest of the time. [Laughing]

Some of the research volunteers had a smoking habit, but they could not smoke during our conversation due to university regulations. However, when I met Sufia (conversation No. 7) on the driveway of the School of Management, prior to the conversation, she stubbed out a cigarette that she had just finished smoking. Alia, my first volunteer, said [Noted at around 38:37 during my first pass of the DVD] that she preferred to watch movies at home, rather than in cinemas, so that she could enjoy a cigarette whilst viewing. I know, from having previously met Bob (conversation No. 10) outside of the research context, that he smokes. I also spoke with Ruby (conversation No. 3) about using movies and television programmes as mood-altering 'substances':

> 06:00 Michael: How do you understand the term 'value'?

> Ruby: In that context, [watching a movie] if I'm getting something from it that, sort of, helps me in some way.
>
> Michael: And where do you find value in movies? […]
>
> Ruby: Things that make me laugh, things that make me cry - something that taps into my emotions more than anything.

Thus we can see people variously working on their current states of being through the ingestion of, or association with, phenomena intended to shift their experiencing in the direction of a preferred, or altered, state. After all, if one felt blissful, replete, and satisfied [or in a state of pain or dissatisfaction, if one prefers/expects those states] one would not need to search-out ways of modifying one's experience, since one's prevailing state would suffice. Gould (1991, p. 196) wrote:

> Product use may be defined as a process in which consumers engage to manipulate their vital energy. Consuming products moves one from one energy state to another.

Gould, then, sets a precedent, in consumer research, for viewing consumption from the perspective of using products to regulate one's, "immediately bodily felt (noticeable) experience […] sensations, and their mediating desires, moods, emotions, and thought" (p. 195). My approach differs from Gould only to the degree to which he seeks to maintain a distinction between "product-use operations" and "nonconsumption activity" (p. 197), whereas I view this distinction as untenable. For example, even whilst ostensibly engaged on a 'nonconsumption' activity, such as conversing, one's own, and the other person's, clothes, spectacles, haircut, and cosmetic products, (along with situational 'props') co-constitute that activity and hence inform the concomitant experiential goings-on.

According to cybernetic theory, discrepancy-reducing-behaviour only occurs when a person's immediate perception fails to accord with his/her reference value (or preferred state). As Powers (2005, p. 45) puts it:

> The main proposition of this book is that all behavior is orientated all of the time around the control of certain quantities with respect to specific reference conditions. The only reason for which any higher organism acts is to counteract the effects of disturbances (constant or varying) on controlled quantities it senses.

Here the term "controlled quantities" corresponds with what I have called 'regulable variables', namely, those parts of a 'field' which one senses, relative to one's reference value(s), and which one may act on in order to bring one's sensing(s) more into line with one's reference value(s). At 35:23 Bella (conversation No. 5) says:

> I had quite a wobbly morning, and some of that was around technology. […] When I was trying to watch television last night […] I couldn't get it to work. And anything like that really upsets me. I know it's unimportant, I know in the scheme of things I shouldn't let it get me down, but it does.

Here Bella invokes the notion of a 'wobble', in contrast to a preferred 'steady' state of being. Bella says how her disturbed state resulted, in part, from a technology failure. On the morning of our conversation Bella had rung the supplier of her TV and had received assistance, over the telephone, which enabled her to remedy the problem with her TV. In terms of self-regulation Bella (like all of us) continually monitors her perceptions in relation to (or in the light of) a range of preferred reference states, levels, or values. When Bella's momentary perception failed to match one of her valued reference levels, Bella acted in such a way as to try to bring

her current perception into closer accord with her relevant reference level. Bella continues (36:36):

> So I got through, I knew it wasn't costing me anything and he was lovely. He didn't make me feel like an idiot. And he just, em, gave me, you know, several possibilities to try and eventually… he even went on his computer and had a look at my hand remote-control to see which one I had, told me what to do, and the picture just came back. And I just said to him 'You are wonderful, I can't praise Richer Sounds enough'.

Rather like the sensors in the research rooms which turned off the lights when the sensors failed to detect movement, Bella failed to detect a television picture, and therefore, as soon as practicable, she acted, in conjunction with a technician, to remedy the situation - namely, to restore the television's picture. Similarly, when the lights went off during a research conversation, as they did during my conversation with Sufia (conversation No. 7), I immediately took action to bring the lights back on - by standing up and waving my arms about. For example (conversation No. 7):

> 01:23:58 [Lights go out in room]
>
> Sufia: Oh!
>
> Michael: No don't worry, it's purely because we're not moving. The time… they turn themselves off, to save energy.
>
> S: Yeh, that's sensible.
>
> M: If there's no movement in a class, they assume there's no one here. So they just switch themselves off.
>
> S: Very technical.

Not only did I take action to bring the lights back on, I also said things to assuage the minor shock that Sufia apparently experienced. Her immediate response to the lights going out

sponsored a perception, in me, of Sufia feeling disturbed. According to my reference value, I didn't want Sufia to feel upset, so I immediately dealt, simultaneously, with the practical [lights] and psychological [shock] disturbances. Sufia's immediate affirmative feedback meant that I got the impression/perception that I had adequately assuaged her 'shock' response.

For me things become particularly interesting in relation to a person's sense-of-self getting disturbed during a research conversation. This occurred most markedly during my conversation with Matt (conversation No. 6).

> 34:34 Matt: […] I was just wanting to challenge on that, what to me felt like a bit of a, sloppy thing to say […] [36:25] I'm just abreacting to, sort of , sloppiness in terms of time and the past and that […].

After expressing my disquiet at Matt characterising what I'd said as 'sloppy' Matt went on to explain:

> 37:18 Matt: The word sloppy goes back to a challenge that I would make of myself in an academic environment, as a mathematician, and it's about always being able to justify what you're doing - and the language you use in maths. Maths can't be sloppy because it doesn't… it's not maths then […] it doesn't lead you to the right place. So, […] it was coming from within me. It's not meant to be an insult.

Matt hereby used academic and mathematical frames of reference to justify the nature and the language of his challenge of what I'd said. However, although Matt tried to smooth down my ruffled feathers and I continued with the conversation in good faith, I never fully recovered from the way I had reacted to the way that Matt had characterised what I had said to him. Indeed I found myself

recounting the incident (albeit anonymously) to my next volunteer, Sufia (conversation No. 7):

> 01:14:18 Michael: I've got a reference point in my last conversation that I had, in this context, where somebody described my… something I'd said as 'sloppy'. [Michael raises his eyebrows; Sufia reciprocates. Michael exhales conspicuously.] And I'm just remembering that and looking at how you've reacted. It reminds me of that night, I went out with my wife for an Indian meal at the Aagrah in Shipley. And we shared a bottle of wine, which we wouldn't do apart from celebratory-type meals. And er, I was still reeling from the conversation that I'd had earlier in the day. And it centred on being accused of… being accused of being sloppy. [Laughing]
>
> 01:15:08 Sufia: I can't believe anyone could say that of you at all.

I cite this example to show that in spite of Matt's reparatory efforts I still left our conversation feeling sufficiently perturbed to require a soothing dose of alcohol in the evening. And at 01:16:08 (conversation No. 7) after I'd told Sufia, "I don't think I recovered from it until the next day", Sufia replied, "I don't think you have, have you, 'cause you're still… it's still got resonance with you hasn't it?", to which I replied, "That's true, that's true. It's entered into this conversation, for sure." So, rather like Ruby (conversation No. 3), who said she had used the conversation with me as an impromptu counselling session, I found myself (anonymously) sharing this anecdote as a means of processing material which I had still not fully reconciled myself to. Clearly the term 'sloppy', when applied to my use of language, created a strong 'error signal' in me. This resulted from a significant mismatch between, on the one hand, how I view my own language skills, and, on the other hand, Matt's characterisation of what I'd said to him (relating to the concept of time) as 'sloppy'. At points during the remainder of my conversation with Matt, I explored the rights and wrongs of Matt's

use of the term sloppy. Yet, as I've said, in spite of Matt saying he hadn't meant to offend me, I nevertheless felt offended. I cite this as an example of the limits of control on my part. Although I immediately registered the impact of the word 'sloppy', on my viscera, and although I immediately verbalised my experience and identified the offending term, I remained perturbed. And, ironically, I recognized, even in the midst of the disturbance, that this would probably constitute an interesting example that I could use in my research write-up.

I experienced a similar, though less-impactful-on-me, episode during my conversation with Bob (conversation No. 10):

> 01:11:00 Bob: I'm actually a bit surprised, what you're doing. I'm surprised 'cause I thought you were involved in film and I thought, 'Oh I can see Michael doing a film and that sort of thing.' But I can't see you doing market research.
>
> Michael: Well, I'm doing it now.
>
> B: Yeh exactly, so I'm surprised yeh. […] I just had you in my head as a punk rocker and similar to me. And you're an artistic man, a holistic man. […] I don't see you as a salesman. [Laughing]
>
> M: But I don't see myself… I'm not a salesman. I don't think you've grasped the weight of what I'm saying to you […].

And so it continued. I registered, and felt perturbed by, the fact that Bob had begun to think of me as a salesman - an identity that really doesn't appeal to me. I then sought to persuade Bob of the merits of my research-undertaking from the perspective of human interaction. More recently, whilst corresponding with Morris B.

Holbrook over the summer of 2012[6] I realised, acutely, that - in spite of Morris' and my category-broadening aspirations - Morris still operates under the moniker of Emeritus Professor of Marketing and I operate as a PhD student within the marketing and consumer research domain. I used to feel much more comfortable attending a college of art, whilst working towards my MA - but enough of me. Here I catch myself self-regulating the level of reflexivity finding its way into this piece of writing.

I have examples of where research volunteers sought to clarify things I had said which didn't sit comfortably with their prevailing sense-of-self. In one particularly interesting example, involving Paul (conversation No. 8), I said:

> 46:41 Michael: Of course. I tell you what I hear in what you've just said to me. I hear you clarifying a point, redefining yourself, lest I defined you in a way that didn't feel quite comfortable. And I think you perceived my… you appear to perceive my expression as… that you were a superficial person, perhaps, that you were just name-dropping… [Paul smiling] that you were just top-show… [Paul nodding] that you were just interested in a superficial impression. So you corrected me [Paul: Yes] by suggesting that my observation was extrinsic [Paul: Em, em] whereas, in actual fact, to defend myself (or to clarify myself), [Paul smiling] if you like, earlier on I would have been talking about how I perceived an intelligence at work and I talked about presence, and we talked about behaviour in terms of honourable behaviour and things like that. But, I think I understand… It seemed like, perhaps, defending your honour [Paul laughing] by saying what you said. And I perfectly understand that.
>
> Paul: No, no it's just more, more, more… clarifying things yeh, than defending.
> [Overlapping]
> Michael: Of course, of course. But I take your point absolutely.

[6] An email exchange which we subsequently edited and had accepted for publication as Woodward and Holbrook (2013)

Paul: OK.

This quote refers to Paul clarifying something I'd said about him, then me clarifying something Paul had implicitly perceived me as doing, and then Paul re-defining what I had described as 'defending his honour' as 'clarifying' - the latter term preferable from Paul's perspective. You will note that at the end of the quoted section I gave Paul 'absolute' assurance that I took his point, and he accepted this and we moved on. Paul, in this way, through clarifying-verbal-expressions, ensured that his preferred definition of himself [His 'reference value'] prevailed, and I acquiesced. This kind of clarifying and counter-clarifying behaviour occurred at other times during the research conversations. For example, during conversation No. 9, at ⏃ 01:17:35, I said that some of Jane's comments, relating to the movie [screened prior to our conversation] seemed quite puritanical - and then I immediately corrected myself and said 'spiritual'. Jane seized on my latter characterization of what she had said, in preference to the first ['puritanical'] one. Here again a person, this time Jane, behaved in a way that ensured that she felt comfortable with what went onto the record. This seems, to me, a clear case of Jane controlling her own perceptions relative to her preferred sense of self. She identified more readily with the notion of having 'spiritual' rather than 'puritanical' values. Each word connotes different things to different people - as with the term 'sloppy' in relation to my conversation with Matt (conversation No. 6). The types of behaviour, discussed here, show the implicated individuals seeking to keep faith with particular senses-of-self - particular 'reference values' if you will.

8.6 Concluding

In the latter part of this chapter I have shown examples, culled from research conversations, of how individuals control 'levels' as a means of regulating their overall perceiving and experiencing. I have shown how the levels that people regulate can pertain to extra-personal phenomena, such as lighting and heating, as well as to intra-personal phenomena such as dehydration, disequilibrium, and self-perception. Splitting the different sorts of regulable variables into five discrete chapters constitutes an abstraction from everyday complexity. In everyday life, all five regulable variables interact and overlap. After completing the final two 'themes' I will attempt to show how living, moment by moment, can entail the regulation of all five regulable variables at once.

* * *

Whilst polishing this chapter [24th December 2013] I regulate the light level within the office, which in turn helps me to guard against eye-strain, which, if not managed, leads to undesirable bloodshot eyes. I also manage the heat-level courtesy of a portable heater positioned just behind me. I ate a sizable breakfast in order to ensure sufficient 'fuel' for working. I have a warm sheepskin waistcoat on and use 'vary-focal' spectacles. These examples constitute specified regulable 'levels': illumination, eye-health, room-/body-temperature, sustenance, and the legibility of text on the screen. I make the point that referring to past events, such as research conversations, can lead one to neglect the immediate manifestations of the phenomena in question - namely 'levels'. A Christmas card just came through the letter box, thus gaining 'access' to my home. The person who sent the card had arranged an insert, "Our News in Brief", in paragraphs starting with the

husband at the top, followed by the wife, then the two daughters (eldest first), and finally news pertaining to family pets. This 'text' clearly exemplifies what I call 'configuring' - the arrangement of elements within a bounded space. Additionally the sender of the card had chosen a card that she felt represented her personal-/family-aesthetic ['Association' - see next chapter] and selected what information to reveal ['Expression' - chapter 10]. Thus all five of my themes exist concurrently, in the microcosm of my current situation. This state of affairs also illustrates an, aforementioned, ongoing tension that I encounter. On the one hand I have a set of research conversations, which took place over two years ago; on the other hand I have immediate phenomenological data, which trumps the past, filling me with a lively here-an-now. How does one incorporate the present - which as a phenomenologist seems essential - whilst discussing past events? As you can see, I have chosen, simply, to incorporate 'the present' - which has already past.

Chapter 9: Association

> Where shall we start? I propose that actions and body-movements in general […] can serve as the primary reference points, because my being and having a body always anchors me firmly in our common cultural world: I always occupy a place. My life, as that of every individual, is uniquely characterized by its movement through situations in places. This is the most general statement that can be made about human living […]. [I]f I - as every individual - always inhabit a unique place at a specific historical time, I also occupy an identifiable space-time coordinate point. […] [T]he reach of human attention may extend beyond the physical givens of the here and now situation. […] [A] person can live simultaneously or successively in quite different situations. I can take a walk through the park, while at the same time I think about a lecture I have to give or daydream about some adventure. […] The observer can never fully fathom what this moving through town meant to me personally. All of my perceptions, for instance, are given solely to me and unless I tell about them to the observer, they remain private […].
>
> - von Eckartsberg (2010, pp. 257-259)

I wrote the following piece of data analysis - enclosed between two-sets of three-asterisks - about a year ago, in April 2012. In her feedback, relating to this extract, Nancy (one of my supervisors) picked-up-on what von Eckartsberg, in the opening quote here, calls "liv[ing] simultaneously or successively in quite different situations", Nancy wrote:

> What intrigues me about this first discussion is how, with Paul, you 'fractured the time-space continuum' (whatever that means). In that present, there was a past *and* a future, many pasts and imaginary futures. […] EXCITING WORK!!!!

The challenge of data analysis, for me, relates to reconciling, in one text: the multiplicity of space-time coordinates implicated in the research process; the complex field-configurations present at each

space-time juncture; and the experiactional complexities manifesting in various field-embedded individuals in their respective loci. For me this complexity necessarily includes the writer, during the writing and assemblage of the text before you, as well as you, the reader during your reading of it.

* * *

During my first pass of conversation No. 8, I noted at 26:24 [henceforth 8,$P_1$26:24] that Paul asks Michael [intentional third-person reference to me, in order to indicate a differently-orientated self to the one writing here] for Michael's understanding of the term 'brand'. At (8,P_2 ♎ 07:09) Michael had encouraged Paul to view their exchange as a reciprocal conversation, rather than a one-way extraction of information, from Paul, by Michael the 'interviewer'. One can thus view Paul's question as an enactment of the 'permission' Michael had given him, but also an 'on-message' question i.e., a question pertaining to the ostensible focus of the research, according to Paul's conception of the research at that time. Paul's question prompts a response from Michael in which Michael talks about the inescapable interaction between commercial and non-commercial phenomena in life. After a five-minute monologue, during which Michael posits a very broad definition of the notion of a brand [including: individuals, universities, clothes, the city of Bradford, Great Britain… (8,P_2 ♎ 26:24)], Paul asks a markedly narrowing question. Specifically, at around 32:27, [Figure 4.1, chapter 4] Paul asks Michael if he has a relationship with a particular brand. Michael counters this by asking Paul about what drives Paul's question. Paul has a particular interest in Michael's appearance and his style of clothing. At 8,$P_1$36:38 [Fig. 4.1, chapter 4] Michael cites Yohji Yamamoto (a Japanese clothes designer) as a personal influence. In 8,CV-L ♎ 36:38 [Fig. 4.3,

Composite Viewing-Log, chapter 4] I noted that Paul, "smiles with recognition" at Michael's revelation.

I first became aware of Yohji Yamamoto around 24th June 1990 [diary entry] after seeing a short piece in the July edition [sic] of *Options* magazine, trailing the film *Notebook on Cities and Clothes* (1989) - a documentary focusing on Yohji Yamamoto. I travelled to Manchester's Corner House cinema to see the film on Sunday 22nd July 1990. After watching the movie I wrote, "I related to & empathised with all that I saw and heard & I felt that I had discovered a 'source'" [postcard written on 22nd July 1990, 16:38/Sunday]. I subsequently saw the movie when it came to the Bradford Playhouse and Film Theatre on 01st November 1990. And on the 27th February 2003 I received the DVD [my first] of *Notebook on Cities and Clothes* from CD Universe in America. Furthermore, on the 20 August 1990 I bought *August Sander's Citizens of the 20th Century* (Sander 1989), a book that both Yohji Yamamoto and Wim Wenders (the director of *Notebook* […]) "knew and treasured", (*Notebook* […] ♎11:49) independently, prior to meeting each other. The Sander's book also appears in the film. In the following quote, which I transcribed from the DVD of *Notebook* […], Yohji Yamamoto refers to Sander's book. The quote links directly to something that occurred during my eighth research conversation:

> In there [Sander (1989)] there is a kind of my ideal clothes, because, I mean, people don't consume the clothing. People can live life with this clothing. So that means, for me, I want to make something like that. For example, at the beginning of the 19th Century, and if you're born in not very rich country, the winter is really winter for you. So it's very cold, so you need a thick coat on you. Then this is life; this is real clothes for you. This is not for the fashion. So the coat is so beautiful because you feel so cold and you can't make your life without this coat. For example, it looks like your friend, or

> it looks like your family. And I feel strong duress on me, if people can wear my things like in that way, then I could be so happy, because [smiling broadly] for example, when the clothes, or dress or jacket, coat, themselves, are left on the floor, or hang on the wall, then in that case you can recognise, 'oh this is John', 'this is Tommy', like that, this is yourself. [01:06:36 → 01:08:56]

Although I do not wear Yohji Yamamoto clothing, I do connect with his taste for monotone, minimalist, lived-in-looking garments. [See Figs. 9.2 & 9.3, this chapter] Paul enumerates the various cities where he has seen Yamamoto clothes on sale (8,P_{1+2} ♎ 37:00) [Figs. 4.1 & 4.2, chapter 4]: Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Vienna, Moscow, and London. Michael asks Paul to describe his image of the Yohji Yamamoto brand; Paul uses the terms "classy" and "expensive" - he says he respects the brand. And at 39:16 [Fig. 9.1, this chapter], during our conversation, Paul says that he feels cold, and as Michael gets up to close a window, Paul walks over to put on his "winter jacket", 'so that he doesn't freeze'. [See Figs. 9.1-9.3, this chapter for a more complete representation of what occurred.] In my uni-log, [Fig. 4.4, chapter 4] at 39:23, I made a note to myself to "Grab [Yohji-Yamamoto-related] quote" - the one you've just read. The Yamamoto quote foregrounds the thermal function of clothes - the fact that clothes keep their wearers warm in winter. Yamamoto plays down the notion of 'fashion' and instead posits a close union between the clothes a person wears and his/her social identity, such that a person's disembodied clothes might signal the absent wearer. Rick Poynor (1990, p. 52), in his review of *Notebook on Cities and Clothes*, highlights, what he sees as, a contradiction, between Yamamoto's stated aspirations and his role as a leading 'fashion' designer:

> The main revelation from Yamamoto - and it goes unremarked by Wenders, who seems to have experienced an epiphany in a Yamamoto jacket - is the essentially

> contradictory nature of the designer's aims. Yamamoto wants his clothes to have the elemental quality he finds in the photographic portraits of August Sander, where clothes are not images, or tokens of identity to be consumed and discarded, but real things inseparably and unselfconsciously a part of the wearer's identity as individual and worker. Yet the relentless turnaround of fashion, its frivolous insistence on a continual present in which last season's clothing is (notionally at least) consigned to the jumble, make this an unattainable and curiously naïve hope for such a sophisticated designer to nurture.

And so, I cite this short episode, from conversation No. 8, as an example of the embedded use of a commercial product (a coat) in response to a primal organismal need, i.e., the will to remain warm and comfortable in winter. Cannon (1939, p. 185), in a quote that suits my purpose here, discusses the use of clothes in the process of regulating body temperature:

> In place of the efficient protection which fur would afford, mankind has to resort to extra clothing - often the fur of lower animals! - to prevent too great loss of heat.

So, even if we grant that clothes have aesthetic and symbolic functions, it seems safe to say that in the cited instance, in conversation No. 8, Paul's jacket predominantly served a thermal function. I cite this as a behavioural manifestation of the regulation of body temperature via the use of a commercial product. In Figure 9.2 (PTO) we can see Michael drinking water - also a regulatory process relating to the levels of body-hydration and vocal-cord lubrication.

00:39:16 Paul: It's quite cold here. [Michael gets up and walks to the window]

00:39:18 Michael: I noticed the window opened during…

Figure 9.1 Paul Stands Up 00:39:28

00:39:23 Paul: If I take my jacket… I can… take my coat, [Paul stands up and walks out-of-frame] my winter jacket. I can wear it. Is that OK?

Figure 9.2 Michael Drinks 00:39:42

00:39:30 Michael: Oh you have it there, of course.

00:39:33 Paul: Because of the cold…

Figure 9.3 Paul Returns 00:39:54

00:39:34 Michael: I forgot that you'd put your jacket there. […] I understand that.

00:39:39 Paul: … so, I don't freeze. [Paul returns to his seat wearing his winter coat]

We could view the actual research conversation as the 'primary' event. In that case, the video-recording constitutes the first representational transformation. And subsequent noticings (documented in the form of viewing-logs, composite viewing-logs, and in the form of a uni-log, themselves constitute further representational layers deriving from the 'original' research event. [See Figure 9.4, below] For me 'data' becomes difficult to isolate. Encountering data invariably contributes to the production of still more data, whether in the form of documents or in the form of phenomenological responses - experiential-data if you like.

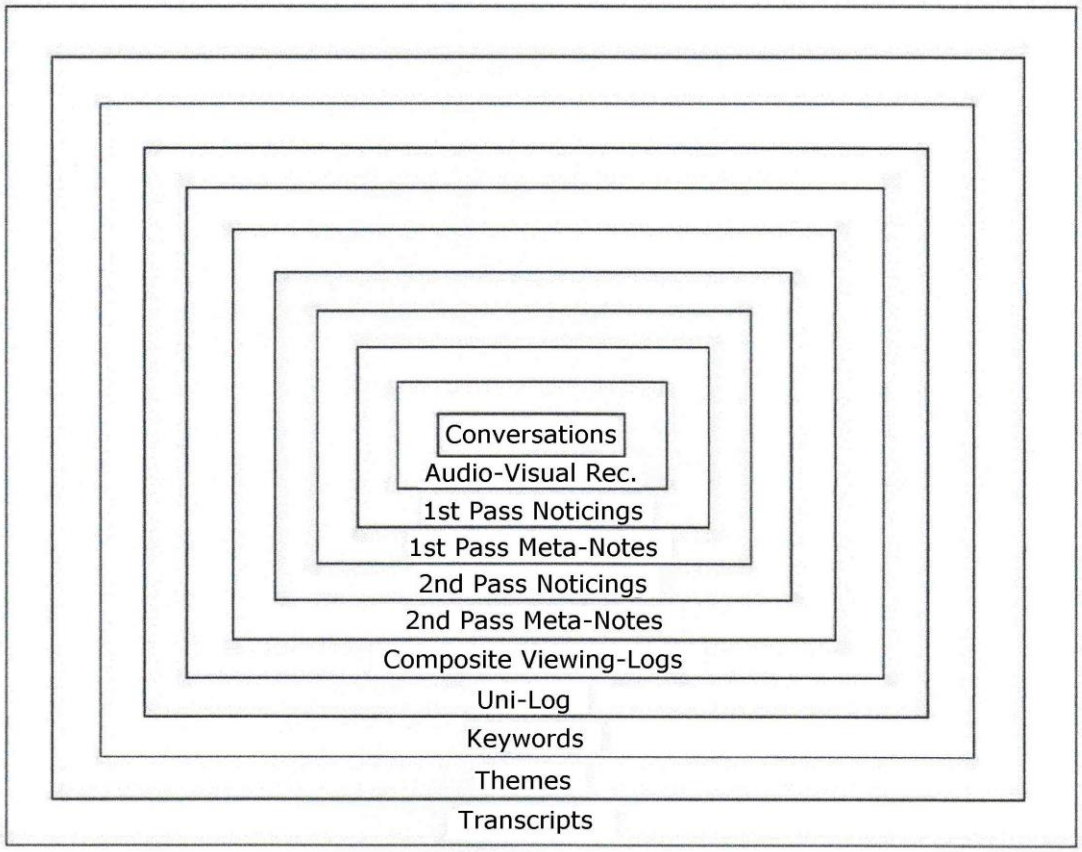


Figure 9.4 Some of the Layers of Representation Comprising My Research Process

* * *

By degree, we regulate who and what we associate with; we also regulate when and how we associate with those particular phenomena. Goffman (1963, p. 64) calls the interpersonal variant of selective association the "'with' relationship". He continues:

> To be 'with' someone is to arrive at a social occasion in his company, walk with him down a street, be a member of his party in a restaurant, and so forth. The issue is that in certain circumstances the social identity of those an individual is with can be used as a source of information concerning his own social identity, the assumption being that he is what the others are.

This process of selective association, whether in relation to people or other phenomena, concomitantly entails dissociation from other alternatives. To eat a vegetarian diet, for example, entails associating with certain foods and dissociating from other foods. In order to evaluate a person, or to just get a measure of him/her, we tend to take note of the manifest phenomena associated with that person, not least his/her body. During a conversation, where two people sit face-to-face, the individuals have a host of manifest indicators at their disposal which they can use to form an impression of the other. However, a field-theoretical perspective encourages us to think in terms of a field-wide potential for awareness. As Parlett, (1997, p.18) puts it, "[…] 'inner and 'outer' reality are both contained within the field, as are other distinctions - such as 'person' and 'situation,' and 'figure' and 'ground.'" Other phenomena interact with our perceptions of the person sat opposite us. Rather like having unrelated-to-film thoughts whilst watching a movie, when talking with another individual we can simultaneously

think and feel in ways unrelated to the topic of conversation. The artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel (Rappolt 2008, p. 74) writes:

> I've always thought about simultaneity of time, I'm talking about one thing, but you're not just hearing what I'm saying to you, you're thinking about whatever happened to you - I don't know what problem you have - but I know you're not just thinking about what I'm saying [No full stop in original]

What we experience, from moment-to-moment, does not simply derive from a particular isolatable stimulus.

So, when we choose to wear certain clothes, or to have our hair cut in a particular way, we materially alter our manifest self - the palpable self that others can readily perceive. And, as with the notion of nested Russian dolls, we may encounter an individual human being, coated (literally or figuratively) with a superficial layer of clothing, positioned, perhaps, within a particular car, shop, research setting etc., in a particular city…. Thus the 'core-doll' - the irreducible embodied self - exists amid a dynamic nested set of container-like structures - each successive 'shell' containing artefacts, other objects, and phenomena, which contextualise the core-doll and give observers clues as to the 'doll's' interests, tastes, and proclivities.

By 'verbally' dissociating oneself from aspects of what one 'materially' associates with, it becomes possible to 'figuratively' distance oneself from that which one has 'literally' associated with. When Alia (conversation No. 1, ♎ 07:39) said, "I found this woman's drawing-style pushed me away from the concept" [of the part-animated, 18-minute-long movie, screened prior to our conversation], she distanced herself from an aspect of the movie she had just watched. Thus, although, to an onlooker, Alia

associated with the move-text in the same manner as the other research volunteers, Alia selectively dissociated herself, verbally, from an aspect of the film that didn't accord with her taste. Without Alia's dissociating statement I might have wrongly assumed that Alia did, indeed, endorse the drawing-style featured in the movie. When Alia went on to say (07:00), "I don't think she's a particularly well-grounded artist, in the old-fashioned way", I challenged her statement. I felt that Alia had sought to find 'objective' grounds for not liking a particular style of drawing. Alia argued that the work compared unfavourably, technically, with other artists that she admired. Interestingly, Bob (conversation No. 10, ten minutes before the end) said he found the aesthetic of the film "abrasive - quite punk"; he liked its 'jaggedness'. Thus Bob associated with the phenomenon that Alia had dissociated herself from. Both had used the movie as a means of communicating their respective sensibilities.

Bella (conversation No. 5) told me that she had had to select between eight and ten musical tracks in connection with an invitation to appear on a local-radio equivalent of *Desert Island Discs.* Bella said (40:00, transcript):

> […]I realised [pause] that they were all pop, rock tracks; there was nothing classical, nothing… no opera or anything like that. And that, sort of, took me back a bit. [Michael: Really?] Yeh it made me feel a bit shallow I suppose, yeh.

Here we see a very clear example of the associational phenomenon that I observed. Bella fears that others will think of her as a 'light-weight' on the strength of her choice of musical tracks. In the light of the cybernetic feedback model [Fig. 9.5, below] I suggest that

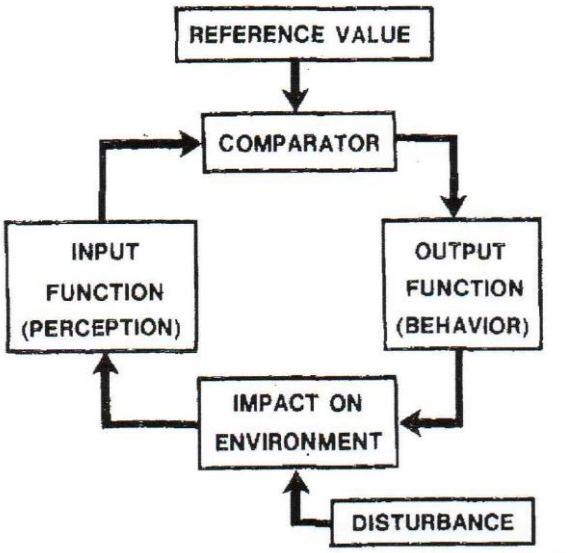


Figure 9.5 The Negative Feedback Loop - the Basic Unit of Cybernetic Control, Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 112)

this points to a discrepancy between (a) a reference value that Bella harbours, concerning a well-rounded, culturally-literate individual, well-versed in the arts, and catholic in her tastes, and (b) her perception of her chosen list of tracks which seemed incongruent with her preferred reference value. A perceived discrepancy (or 'error signal') developed, manifesting as a reduction in Bella's self-esteem. Later in our conversation I said to Bella (52:41) [transcript]:

> Michael: So, I wonder… I'm asking you if you see a link between… between feeling that you ought to have some classical on your desert island, and feeling that you ought to have a broader cultural palate, in terms of having a few heavy-weight books under your belt or whatever. And perhaps being able to talk to your friends about what were [sic] on telly last week, or the latest documentary. [Bella: Em em] And I'm just putting that to you.
>
> Bella: A yeh, I do feel… I do feel that definitely, yeh.

> M: As if you strategically broaden your diet lest you get thought of as being a lightweight [Bella nodding] or, you know, a superficial airhead, who's only interested in gardening and The Rolling Stones?
>
> B: Yeh [nodding] definitely.

Similarly, when I asked Paul (conversation No. 8) if whether knowing that I planned to film him had influenced what he had chosen to wear on the day of the conversation, he said (01:11) [transcript]:

> [pause] I would say a bit, but not necessarily, actually, because I do [pause] dress well even without that presentation. And I'm quite conscious of how I look. Yeh, and em… because I believe that people will see you or perceive you because of the way you look.

So, whether through our choice of, for example: friends, art, music, or clothes, we become associated with certain phenomena and dissociated from other phenomena. The notion of Impression Management hinges on just this way of thinking. Rosenfeld *et al* (2002, pp. 7, 8) write:

> […] IM is a universal feature of human behavior where people constantly 'package' themselves so as to communicate their desired images and identities to significant others. […] IM is seen as *a goal-directed activity of controlling information about persons, objects, ideas or events, to audiences.*

Impression Management [IM] focuses on the control of outputs: information, clothes, office-design and the like; while Perceptual Control Theory (Powers 2005) posits the notion that individuals act as they do, ultimately, in order to control *their own* perceptions, or inputs, relative to some preferred 'internal' reference level or other. So, for example, when Paul (conversation No. 8) dresses in a

certain way, we can see this as an attempt to control the impressions that other people form of him, i.e., IM. However, viewed from a Perceptual Control Theory perspective, Paul holds certain reference values - he wants to become rich and successful in his career for example - and Paul monitors his own perceptions, as he interacts with other people, and if he perceives that another person does not treat him in a manner which he feels he deserves, warrants or desires, then, according to Perceptual Control Theory, Paul will act in such a way as to bring *his own* immediate perceptions into closer alignment with his preferred reference value(s). This discrepancy-reducing behaviour modifies the perceivable situation. The modified perceptible situation then gets perceived anew, by Paul, and the new perception gets compared to his reference value in an ongoing, self-adjusting, feedback loop. Moss (1978, p. 86) describes this circular process very clearly:

> Perception and action are usually studied in isolation from one another. Yet, both neurologically and at the level of human action in lived-space, we discover that they are intertwined. To be underway in some action is to organize our perception towards some object, and inversely, to perceive a situation in the world is to be invited into active involvement in that situation. With every step forward, our view of the situation is adjusted; with every adjustment in our view, we are invited to step forward anew. Merleau-Ponty has called this continuous interplay between man and his world a *dialectic.* In this dialectic between man and his world it is difficult to distinguish strictly between perception and action […].

Powers (2005, p. 41) puts it more succinctly, "What an organism senses affects what it does, *and what it does affects what it senses*." Indeed, this interrelationship between experience and action led von Ekartsberg (1978, pp. 200-201) to coin the term 'experiaction' - the non-dualistic "interdependence-concept" that fuses 'experience' and 'action'.

When Paul (conversation No. 8) mentioned the various European cities that he had either lived in or visited, I felt impressed. But how did my feeling impressed impact on Paul's perceptions? Paul didn't want me to think of him as simply a name-dropper - as someone only interested in creating a superficial impression. Paul went to great lengths to express the fact that he holds deep humanitarian values and wishes to become successful, in large part, so that he can help people less fortunate than himself. So when Paul admitted that he wanted to become rich and successful, he felt the need to qualify this lest I perceived his ambition as purely hedonistic and self-seeking.

> 01:14:21 Paul: So, I believe that if I'm highly successful I'll be in a position to help everybody. And that gives me more intrinsic joy than dressing good, you know what I mean. Dressing good is just a taste that is not all that important, you know what I mean. What gives that intrinsic value, the intrinsic joy, is to help, you know what I mean.

Relatedly, when Alia (conversation No. 1) fed-back to me that she perceived the research room as professionally set-up, I got my sense-of-self - as a conscientious academic - corroborated. A problem arose, as I noted in the previous 'levels' chapter, when my perception of the feedback from Matt, and from Bob - relating, respectively, to my purported 'sloppiness' and my becoming a 'salesman' - failed to accord with my sense-of-self. Carver and Scheier (1982, p. 113) suggest that:

> […] the central function of a feedback system […] is to create and maintain the perception of a specific desired condition: that is, whatever condition constitutes its reference value or standard of comparison […].

According to this model, the reference states, or reference values, that people employ as benchmarks, constitute very important

behaviour-informing phenomena. My data analysis thus, in part, entails me making reasoned inferences about the particular reference values that co-sponsor an individual's behaviour at a particular point in time. We have already seen, in chapter seven, how Matt's and Ruby's concepts of 'research' and 'counselling' ruled-in certain types of behaviour and ruled-out others. Actors swearing, in an 18-certificate movie, will not surprise anyone; the 18-certificate, itself, leads one to expect it. However, swearing in a research conversation seems more moot. In terms of the Russian doll analogy, the characteristics of the particular 'container' that we find ourselves in, at a certain point in time, will inform, by degree, what context-appropriate behaviour we manifest whilst in that container. In this sense, shared frames of reference - such as celebrating birthdays - mean that people, by-and-large, behave in 'appropriate', socially-sanctioned ways. When people's conduct fails to conform to frame-specific expectations it can lead, amongst other things, to sanctions or sulks. When Matt (conversation No. 6) described something I'd said as "sloppy", I felt that he had overstepped my standard of politeness. I angled for a retraction, but didn't receive one; we don't always get what we would prefer. We can thus think of the actualisation of control (or regulation) as a relative, and not an absolute, term - we control by degree, and, indeed, often lose it.

With regard to research settings, I have already mentioned the no-smoking rule. I've mentioned expectations regarding levels of honesty and accuracy in research. I've mentioned ethical norms relating to anonymity and confidentiality. I've touched on the appropriateness of dress, and the suitability/unsuitability of certain vocabulary. In other words, the very notion of 'research' has a powerful framing - and thus regulating - function. And according to the cybernetic feedback model, a person's reference values, in

relation to 'research', will function as the benchmarks against which the person's immediate perceptions will get pattern-matched. One of the problems with the negative-feedback-loop-model, as I see it, relates to the fact that sensing gets posited as something that pertains to phenomena 'outside' of the organism. I have already made the point that, so-called, 'inputs' may emanate from 'within' the sensing organism. You will note that in Figure 12.2 (Chapter 12) I have tweaked the negative feedback loop model to include intra-personal sensing. Thus, for example, a person may think in an unwelcome-to-self, aberrant manner. And, if religious (and/or desperate) s/he might invoke a higher power in an attempt to curtail this mode of thinking - thinking at odds with the tidy mind that s/he might prefer to have. Thus the person may silently pray, such that an onlooker would not see any overt behaviour, and yet a battle for control of the person's mental functioning rages in the privacy of the person's own subjective domain. As already stated, a field-theoretical orientation implies a cross-boundary scope, such that a person may alight on any aspect(s) of the nested containers which we can think of as comprising us (intra-organismally) and containing us (extra-organismally). A person's 'inner' goings-on form a part of the inferred, overarching, all-containing, 'objective' world. In scanning his/her idiosyncratically-perceived organism/environment field, a person may attend to any aspect of that field, whether perceived as existing 'inside' or 'outside' of his/her body.

We may, if we wish, conceive of ourselves, within research settings, as primarily engaged in controlling other people's perceptions, à la Impression Management (Rosenfeld *et al* 2002). Alternatively we can, in line with Perceptual Control Theory (Powers 2005), think of the two participants, in a research conversation, as interdependently engaged in the process of managing *their own*,

respective, perceptions, via their behavioural interventions. Whilst we may, through our strategic (and inadvertent) actions, affect how others perceive us, the will to affect the other, according to PCT, stems from the more basic wish to control what *we* perceive. According to PCT we want to perceive that *they* perceive us in the manner that we would prefer. Thus we act on them to engender *our* preferred perception. Hence Powers (2005, p.47) suggests that *all* of a person's immediate behaving serves to control what s/he momentarily perceives, relative to what s/he currently expects, desires, prefers etc.:

> The main proposition of this book is that all behavior is oriented all of the time around the control of certain quantities [environmental (or internal) regulable variables] with respect to specific reference conditions. The only reason for which any higher organism acts is to counteract the effects of disturbances (constant or varying) on controlled quantities it senses. When the nature of these controlled quantities is known together with the corresponding reference condition, variability all but disappears from behavior.

The five, abstract, regulable variables that comprise my 'themes' ['access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'], when specified, as in the case of, say, the 'configuring' of a piece of writing, constitute the phenomena which an individual may act on to bring his/her perception of the acted-on variable more into line with his/her 'reference condition', namely, what s/he would desire/expect/prefer to perceive. So yes, the individual does work on, say, the 'configuration' of the written work, BUT, importantly, only in order to bring his/her immediate perception of the acted-on variable (say the writing) into closer accord with the reference condition/level/value against which s/he benchmarks his/her perception of the regulable variable (or 'controlled quantity'), in this example, the writing.

As with the ‘access’, ‘configuration’, and ‘level’s’ chapters, I posit ‘association/dissociation’ as regulable variables in an overarching process of regulating one’s moment-to-moment perceptions with reference to preferred, expected, or hoped-for states of being. Our physical body, itself becomes the focus of regulatory activities. What do we allow in? (‘access’). How do we wear our hair? (‘configuration’). Do we remain hydrated? (‘levels’). In this, most recent, chapter I focused on how we may regulate what, who, and where we associate with. This has a literal dimension, in terms of bodily proximity, and a figurative dimension, in terms of what we associate with mentally and via our various forms of expressive conduct such as speaking, and writing. Associating with, and dissociating from, particular phenomena, constitute ways of regulating what we perceive from moment to moment, and, of course, what others may perceive with regard to us.

In the next chapter I will consider the passage of phenomena from a human being into that human being’s environment - ‘expression’ - along with the restriction, or withholding, of this traffic. This also includes ‘expressive’ behaviours which do not necessarily see the light of day, such as when hormones get released within the body, or when thinking occurs but remains unarticulated.

Chapter 10: Expression

10.1 The Main Body of the Chapter

> Forever losing the thread and picking it up again. If it weren't a real-life presentation of the ongoing flow of consciousness, a subject of great interest to me as an existential-phenomenological psychologist, and thus justified or perhaps slightly rationalised, I might become annoyed at these seeming interruptions of the narrative. But they are part of the narrative as well … anyway … as I was saying …
>
> - Rolf von Eckartsberg (1978, p. 187)

I have employed the opening quote in support of not immediately engaging in 'data analysis' in the 'expected' sense of focusing on what went on during research conversations. As previously stated, throughout the process of data analysis I found it necessary to question and explore the very process I found myself engaged in. Whilst I can see the logic of grouping these 'interruptions' together and presenting them in a dedicated-to-them chapter, I like the practice of running the 'meta analysis' alongside the 'data analysis' per se, since to do so accords with the chronology and the phenomenology of the lived process. I fear that the tidying-up of our accounting, whilst necessary by degree, can turn the final documents into distant relations of what actually happened. I will begin this chapter, then, with further discussion relating to the nature of data. My developing understanding of data has implications for the way I approach 'data analysis'.

* * *

I have reached an important point in my researching process. I recognise that I/people can only know the experience of others via

my/their own experiencing of others' expressing. And, as I have repeatedly said, the experiencing that I/people sustain whilst exposed to the expressing of the other, will include some noticings *not* deriving from the other's expressing. As Julian Schnabel (Rappolt 2008, p. 74) put it:

> I've always thought about simultaneity of time, I'm talking about one thing, but you're not just hearing what I'm saying to you, you're thinking about whatever happened to you - I don't know what problem you have - but I know you're not just thinking about what I'm saying [No full stop in original]

In other words, I/people don't simply constitute a blank canvas on which the other paints a rendition of his/her experience for me/us to peruse. Any momentary act of perceiving that I/we undertake, whilst addressing the expressing of another person, will exceed simply that which the other expresses. Minimally I/we will register my/our own moment-to-moment intra-personal goings-on that I/we host whilst registering aspects of another person's expressive output. This, of course, applies reciprocally between interactants. Thus my/our full-blown experiencing, whilst addressing the output of the other, does not simply equate, on a one-to-one ratio, with what the other person expresses. Furthermore, the other person's expressive output does not encapsulate the entirety of that person's full-blown momentary experiencing. So, although I/we nominally and ostensibly have a conversation with person 'X', 'noise' will inevitably disrupt a pure transmission of 'content' from one party to the other. Although the term 'noise' usually connotes negative associations,[7] for me, here, the term 'noise' pertains to all of the sensory goings-on which co-constitute full-blown experiencing within a given situation, but which fall outside of the, nominally, focal activity of, in this example, 'conversing with person X'. Thus

[7] For example Boesch (1997, p. 175) suggests that, "Noise is 'sound dirt,'" which echoes Mary Douglas's (1966, p. 35) quote, "*Dirt is matter out of place*".

the very concept of 'noise' presupposes, and upholds, the notion of a pure (or purer) transmission of sound. And pushing this way of thinking slightly further, the conceptual frame of 'conversing' implies a straightforward interaction between two, or more, people. If, instead, we frame the event as two or more individuals selectively interacting with aspects of their respective 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'fields', we frame the event in a manner which anticipates a more promiscuous, dynamic play of each interactant's focal awareness. However, each individual can only know what goes on within his/her own 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'. The very labelling of an event, as say 'conversing', triggers connotations, within those familiar with the language spoken, which illicit, for example, certain expected norms of politeness and turn-taking, which may belie the actual subjective experiencing which occurs under the rubric of 'conversing'.

I take it that we can't avoid filtering the expressive output of the other through our own 'system', resulting in that other person's articulations co-sponsoring our full-blown momentary experiencing, and acting, as we associate with the other person. I simply cannot address the content of another's expressive output except as that output contributes to my self-perceived 'inner' and 'outer' goings-on. Sure I can play the unabridged DVD recordings of each of the ten research conversations that I participated in. I can transcribe, in minute detail, every utterance made therein, along with some of the non-verbal occurrences. And I can quote, directly and accurately, from those transcripts. But three intractable issues remain: (1) unless and until someone reads those transcripts, or those quotations, the 'data' remain latent experiaction-triggering stimuli. Whether I, as researcher, or you as reader, address the empirical material, someone has to actualise the data's potential meaning. (2) At best, what the other person said and did

constitutes a non-exact, non-exhaustive account of his/her full-blown experiencing during the research conversation. And (3) I see, listen-to, touch, and smell another person's (voluntary and involuntary) expressive output in a non-immaculate way, by which I mean that the other person and I do not share an experiential umbilical cord down which undiluted raw experiences flow between us. We will, most probably, miss certain details and attend to goings-on that exist beyond the expressive-output issuing from the other. Similarly, when watching the audio-visual recording of a research conversation, we will not perceive it comprehensively or exhaustively - such objectivist concepts don't even make sense in the realm of perceiving.

I host an endless-till-death [and, who knows, perhaps even beyond-death] stream (interrupted somewhat by sleep) of 'experiaction'. This moment-to-moment experiaction - as far as I can see - constitutes all that I consciously know, and ongoingly do. Whether you put me in a jail cell or on the moon, I will experiact. And whether I have a cell-mate, books, or other astronauts for company, does not alter the fact that, whilst these external-to-me phenomena may enter my stream of experiaction, these phenomena do not monopolise my experiactional stream. If 'I' and the 'other' coincided exactly at one space-time coordinate, nothing would exist to distinguish us from one another - we would have become one. Pregnancy constitutes an interesting test-case of this mode of thinking, where the unborn child, for nine months, shares the same space-time coordinate as the mother - albeit in an inner-mother enclave. However, the unborn child still occupies a unique space within the mother; the mother's heart or bladder could not simultaneously occupy the same space as the baby. R. D. Laing (1967, p. 20) writes:

> I wish to define a person in a twofold way: in terms of experience, as a centre of orientation of the objective universe; and in terms of behaviour, as an origin of actions.

According to Laing's notion of personhood, my essential functions - my 'being' and my 'doing' - mean that I exist as identifiably different from whatever I come into contact with. And yet food, when I eat it, becomes me, air becomes me, and other sensory impingements 'enter' my consciousness. But in order to become a part of me I have to transform/translate the non-me stuff into a form that allows my system(s) to digest and assimilate it. This 'economy', this 'commerce', this transacting, this interacting, between the 'me' and the 'not me' constitutes my life. And the concomitant behavioural and experiential particulars of that ongoing 'negotiation' constitute my life in the very process of me living it. Any willed attempts to make public our respective private goings-on - or, indeed, any unwitting 'leakages' thereof - constitute, for me, the heart of social life. Without palpable-to-others indicators, or proxies of my inner goings-on, others will have 'nothing to go on'.

* * *

I no longer class myself as a student of 'consumption experiences', if by that we mean cherry-picking aspects of people's experiactional streams and attributing those experiences and behaviours to particular 'consumed' phenomena. I want only to address momentary being in its perceived entirety, which I can only conceivably accomplish, directly, in relation to myself. I accept the perceived entirety of one's moment-to-moment being as 'life as we individually know it'; all that we momentarily register and do, necessarily manifests in our consciousness and our conduct here and now - ongoingly.

* * *

The researching process has afforded me a series of existential contexts [‘fields’] in which I have interacted with various people, a guide dog, manifold animate and inanimate phenomena, and texts.

* * *

Here and now - 13th November 2013, 17:32/Wednesday - I find myself interacting with a draft chapter that I completed on the 19th August 2013.

* * *

So, whether I experiact in association with other human beings (such as in research conversations or during ‘supervision’), or I associate with various inanimate texts (such as DVD recordings or written materials), these manifold phenomena co-sponsor, what Hansen (2003, p. 206) terms, ‘affective correlates’ within me. I understand Hansen’s term, ‘affective correlates’, to mean the experiential ‘realities’ that concurrently accompany our involvement with particular phenomena in particular contexts. Importantly, for me, the momentary full-blown experiaction that an individual hosts does not simply get ‘caused’, in full, by particular stimuli; rather, the person and his/her environment co-constitute an interdependent field of constituent parts. At any, hypothetically, frozen/arrested moment in space-time, a person’s experiaction exists within a complex configuration of elements which collectively constitute the entire field-conditions that pertain at that moment. This purportedly objective, whole ‘field’ differs from an individual’s 360°-‘inner’-‘outer’-‘field’ (i.e., the world as it exists for the

individual - as s/he experiences it). But, as Nagel (Hoffmeyer 1998, p. 35) puts it:

> […] the fact that reality extends beyond what is available to our original perspective does not mean that all of it is available to some transcendent perspective that we can reach from here […].

Seen from the perspective of $person_2$, $person_1$ constitutes a part of $person_2$'s environment. $Person_2$ constitutes his/her own "centre of orientation" and "origin of actions" (Laing 1967, p. 20). The notion of total objectivity implies the possibility of an 'all-encompassing centre of orientation', one with direct access to all constituent, 'individualised centres of orientation', along with access to the range of goings-on that lay beyond the bounds of human knowing. This possibility requires nothing less than a god-like omniscience and omnipresence.

The very notion of 'data' implies some sort of quasi-stable or enduring entity, which we can 'analyse' in some way. But, to the limits of the view afforded by my current field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed vantage point, I can only tell you what I register at a point in space-time - even if I speak about prior events. I take it that you, too, can only speak from, and in relation to, your own current, goings-on - whether conscious or otherwise. This may include remembering, projecting forward in time, and even fabricating your testimony and behaviour. All such expressive acts necessarily emanate from us and thus relate to our (conscious or sub-conscious) goals/objectives. And, due to the limitations of representing consciousness through language, even our respective in-good-faith sharing can not include all of our noticings, in all of their detail.

Although I haven't written touchy-feely things, whilst writing this prose, such as, 'now my nose itches' or 'now I need to stretch', I have experienced a strong, positive 'affective correlate' whilst writing. Francis Bacon, the 20th century painter, described his creative process as (Sylvester 2002, p. 149) like, "following this kind of cloud of sensation in yourself". However, I do not suggest that I have simply expressed an existing-before-writing feeling-state; rather, the writing process, itself, constitutes a kind of feedback loop, where what I write, itself, contributes to a whilst-writing feeling-state, and that whilst-writing-feeling-state, in turn, informs what I write etc., etc. In an important sense, what I have written in this opening section of this chapter exemplifies the theme of the chapter, 'expressing'. I have expressed - and in many cases re-expressed - some of the things that seem important to me at this juncture, in this particular context - at home in bed on a cold Wednesday evening in March 2013.

* * *

And now, I find myself revising the chapter, on a cold Wednesday evening in November 2013.

* * *

I key-in the hand-written draft now [28th March 2013] on a bright-but-cold sunny Thursday afternoon, prior to going for a supervision meeting with Nancy at 16:00.

* * *

And I proof-read this section now, having met Nancy yesterday.

* * *

And I proof-read this chapter now, on the 28th April 2013, as part of the revision process.

* * *

Now [29th April 2013 at 16:38] if find myself keying in yesterday's hand-written proofing, on a sunny afternoon, with a light breeze detectable.

* * *

The production of this text incorporates a series of space-time-specific noticings and actions. Yet this kind of multiplicity usually disappears into the polished surfaces of finished academic texts.

* * *

Alfred Korzybski (1951, pp. 190-192) posits, amongst others, three means of representing person/environment-specificities in a written form. Firstly, he advocates the use of 'indexing', as in: x_1, x_2, x_3, or $person_1$, $person_2$, $person_3$.

> The role of the indexes is to produce indefinitely many *proper names* for the endless array of unique individuals or situations with which we have to deal in life. Thus, we have changed a *generic* name into a *proper* name.

Instead of writing about 'chairs', we might write in terms of $chair_1$, $chair_2$, or $chair_3$ etc. Thus we can identify specific chairs as well as using the class name 'chair'. This suggestion, and the two suggestions that follow, aim to help us to linguistically map our lives

in a manner that attests to the singularity and time-specificity of constituent elements. Secondly, Korzybski posits the notion of 'chain indexing'. Thus we might have:

> […] $chair_{11}$ (in a dry attic), $chair_{12}$ (in a damp cellar) […]. The role of chain indexes is to provide a technique for the introduction of environmental factors, conditions, situations, etc. On the human level, these would include psycho-logical, socio-cultural, etc., factors.

Again Korzybski wants to make us conscious of the fact that $person_{11}$ (me during a research conversation) differs from $person_{12}$ (me at home watching an audiovisual recordings of the research conversation). And $person_{13}$ (me during a supervision meeting) differs from both $person_{11}$ and $person_{12}$. This kind of notation reminds us that context has a bearing on the experiences and actions (experiactions) that 'the same' individual will host. Thirdly, Korzybski goes on to posit the notion of 'dating' as in, me^{2008} (the year I started my PhD), and how this contrasts with me^{2013} (two months before submitting my PhD thesis). Korzybski writes, "the space-time world of motion and change, of growth, decay, transformation, etc.," gets overtly represented. We can easily fall into assuming consistency and continuity, whereas Korzybski's devices invite us to confront dynamism and to adopt a process-aware orientation. Collectively these three devices - indexing, chain indexing, and dating - provide the parsimonious means of representing: self, others [people and other living animals/things], places, inanimate phenomena, organizations, ideas, and so on, as singular, context-specific, and time-specific phenomena. Clearly the city of $Bradford^{1985}$ differs, in many respects, from the city of $Bradford^{2013}$ and yet the same title, 'Bradford', persists in relation to these divergent sets of particulars. Thus Korzybski has provided

some linguistic tools for allowing writers and readers to remain mindful of discontinuities in identities, in the flux of space-time.

* * *

By monitoring, and trying to, selectively, represent, what Bacon referred to as, the inner "cloud of sensation" that I experience whilst writing, I have articulated some, important-to-me, ideas. I don't identify as an 'auto-ethnographer' or an 'introspector'. I identify as a human being in communion with my existential lot. Call it 'research', call it 'data analysis', call it 'writing', call it what you will, but, seen from my perspective, I can only ever experiact wherever I find myself, in [physical and mental] association with whoever and whatever I find myself with. Any pieces of, so-called, 'data', or texts, which co-constitute a particular 'field' - at a particular time - with me, and which I register on some level or other, will contribute to my experiaction there and then - or here and now.

* * *

At 25:57, during my conversation with Sufia (conversation No. 7[16 Nov 2011]) [Room TS 0.20] I noted that Sufia had laughed whilst watching the movie that I screened prior to our conversation.

> Sufia: I just found it very humorous in places.
>
> Michael: Yeh, clearly, you weren't doing that for my benefit; that was an involuntary expression I guess?
>
> S: Yeh, yeh.

This, for me, raises an interesting issue. At times we may strategically hold back from expressing our opinions or impressions,

lest we upset another person or jeopardise our chances of getting a job for example. But at other times we say and do things in a spontaneous involuntary fashion. At 40:59, during conversation No. $5^{09\ Nov\ 2011}$, with Bella, [Room TS 0.25] she began to cry. Bella's crying, ostensibly, exemplifies the involuntary loss of self-control. However, viewed from the perspective of homeostasis, crying constitutes an aspect of involuntary self-regulation. Perls *et al* (1951, p. 276) write:

> And even when the 'objective' situation cannot be changed, as when a loved one dies, there are regulating reactions of the organism itself, such as crying and mourning, that help restore equilibrium if only we allow them to.

Indeed, Bella (44:45) specifically cites the likely 'cause' of her emotional outburst that took place during our conversation:

> Bella: Well I know… Yeh I know where it comes from. It comes from the fact that my mother died when I was a baby and that I never grieved, because [pause] [Bella shrugs] there was nobody around, you know. Like if it had happened to a child now, there would have been all sorts of agencies helping the family.

Yet later, (01:00:15), Bella talks about how, with the perspective of hindsight, she recognises that, as a child, she unwittingly used books and movies as grieving aids:

> Bella: I mean, I used that as a tool when I was a child; that was how I made myself grieve, or enabled myself to grieve.
>
> Michael: Using movies?
>
> B: Erm, books and movies yeh.
>
> M: You knew what pressed your buttons?

B: Yeh, I did.

M: And you would press them in a controlled way and get your release through that?

B: Yeh, and I didn't know what I was doing.

It seems that although Bella didn't get any 'professional' help, as a bereaved child, she did, unwittingly, do things that enabled her to grieve.

* * *

Derlega and Chaikin (1977, p. 102) suggest that the notion of 'privacy' constitutes:

> […] a process of boundary regulation, controlling how much (or how little) contact an individual maintains with others. Self-disclosure involves the verbal transmission of information. Adjustment of self-disclosure outputs and inputs is boundary regulation; the extent of control one maintains over this exchange of information contributes to the amount of privacy one has in a social relationship.

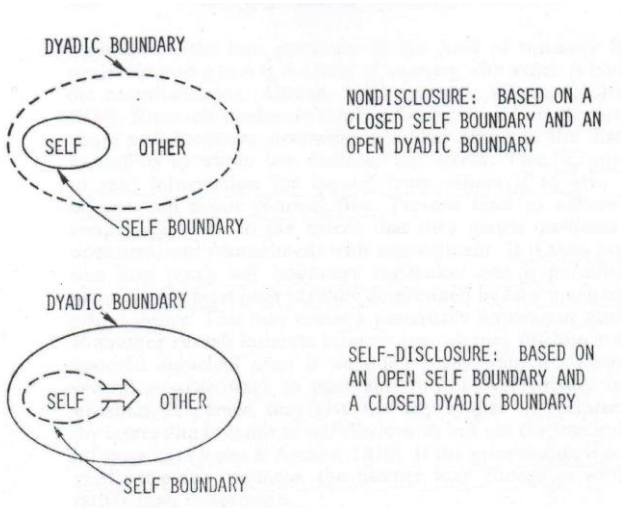


Figure 10.1 Self-Disclosure as a Function of Self- and Dyadic-Boundary Adjustments (Derlega & Chaikin (1977, p. 105)

Derlega and Chaikin (1977, p. 104) continue:

> One boundary, the 'dyadic boundary,' insures the discloser's safety from leakage of information to uninvited third parties; this boundary establishes the precondition for self-disclosure but is not self-disclosure. It is - as construed by an individual - the boundary within which it is safe to disclose to the invited recipient and across which the self-disclosure will not pass. That is, the disclosure is safe with the recipient, as perceived by the discloser. The second boundary is the 'self boundary' around the person; it is modified by self-disclosure. We maintain a barrier around ourselves which is based on nondisclosure. This barrier is opened when we self-disclose.

The research setting effectively provides a regulated dyadic boundary. I gave volunteers assurances that I would not use their real names and that I would only use the recorded material in ways agreeable to each volunteer. I managed this through the use of a detailed, permission-giving, consent form, that each volunteer could personalise. [See Fig. 3.3, chapter 3] According to this privacy theory, when someone perceives a dyadic boundary as 'safe' they will feel more inclined to open the self boundary. Ruby (conversation No. $3^{03\ Nov\ 2011}$) [Nancy's office] exemplified this principle when she told Nancy, one of my supervisors, during their post-research-conversation debrief:

> […] because I didn't know him [Michael], I've never even seen him around campus, so I felt pretty comfortable knowing that I probably wouldn't see him again much. So yeh, I think the majority of people will open up more to strangers than people they know.

Ruby here alludes to the useful-to-her anonymity of speaking with me. Ruby doesn't mention the potential threat of me leaking information about her to third parties. The fact that I don't know any of Ruby's extended circle of friends makes the likelihood of any

of her associates gleaning private information about Ruby, from me, quite remote - this, in addition to my own ethical obligation of confidentiality. However, this does not mean that everyone in a research setting will wish to bare their, proverbial, soul.

I noted that Neil (conversation No. $2^{25\ Jul\ 2011}$) [Room TS. 019] steered our conversation largely along 'professional' lines. Although we talked at length about the juxtaposition of film texts - in relation to film programming [Neil's job] - we spoke very little about our 'private' lives or even, reflexively, about the dynamics of our conversation per se. At one particular point, after I had asked Neil a series of questions pertaining to how people respond to his high-profile job title, I asked Neil (37:56), "Do you find this phenomenon… this topic somewhat an interesting phenomenon?" to which Neil replied, "Yeh I do. I'm interested in the relationship between film texts and institutions […]". Thus Neil says that he finds the topic of my preceding questions interesting and then proceeds to turn-on-a-sixpence, so to speak, steering the conversation in an entirely different direction. Indeed, towards the end of our conversation (13:50 [second layer of DVD]) I asked Neil, "How do you experience your energy now, as distinct from when we started?", to which Neil replied:

> I feel that we arrived at a point, maybe 30 or 40 minutes into the conversation, that I felt quite interested… I felt more interested to pursue the conversation and that since then I've felt more energised. […] I felt that […] my input of my interests and your challenging or questioning of what I was saying possibly resulted in me feeling more energised, which I hadn't necessarily expected.

Not surprisingly, Neil's interest peaked, and his energy level raised, after he had steered the conversation away from, what one could describe as, a more 'personal' and perhaps 'psychological' direction,

and toward a more professionally-orientated [film-related] line of enquiry. Interestingly, the term 'cybernetics' - though often associated with machines and computers - derives from the Greek word 'kubernētē' meaning 'steersman' - a person who steers a boat or ship (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary* [11th Edition]). This accounts for why the terms 'control' and 'regulation' crop up so regularly in relation to cybernetics, homeostasis, and the 'negative feedback loop'. The negative feedback loop represents the process of experiaction in which an individual, animal, or machine acts so as to maintain his/her/its sensings relative to his/her/its reference values. The steersman, similarly, acts by adjusting the oars (or tiller) to ensure that the boat heads in his/her intended direction.

We can see from this example that Neil powerfully steered the conversation relative to his own preference (or 'reference value') and I acquiesced - not least because the notion of juxtaposing film texts seemed close to my research, in the sense that professional film programmers seek to regulate: (a) audiences' cinema-going behaviours and experiences, (b) the host cinemas' brand images and reputations, and (c) the programmers' individual professional reputations through finding juxtapositions of movies (i.e., sequences of films shown back-to-back, for example) which entice and entertain audiences. Editing academic journals, similarly, involves editors seeking to compile interesting selections of articles which will hopefully appeal to each journal's readership, maintain (or enhance) each journal's image/reputation, and, perhaps, manifest each editor's editorial style and/or each journal's 'house style'.

* * *

An interesting issue arose in relation to my conversation with Jane (conversation No. $9^{28\ Nov\ 2011}$) [Room TS 01.05]. I found myself feeling sexually attracted to Jane during our conversation. I had not met Jane on a one-to-one basis previously, and I did not anticipate feeling attracted to her during our conversation. I did not articulate this phenomenon during the conversation; however, my tongue-tiedness in the initial stages of the conversation, with hindsight, attests to subliminal goings-on within me:

> 00:06:52 Michael: I suppose I… [pause] You can sense a… [pause] You can sense… [pause] in me a certain [pause] lack of flow… or a lack of [long pause] slickness. And I find that interesting, in itself, the fact that [long pause] in your company, in this context, I… I don't feel I can find my words very easily. Sometimes I speak very fluently and er… and very confidently, and yet in this context, in your company, I… I feel a certain - it's not reticence, a kind of shyness to speak - but I, kind of, want to try and find a way of speaking which feels authentic. Because as I speak now I feel… I feel, kind of, not relaxed. I don't feel in my… in a comfortable position. And I don't cite that as a complaint [Jane laughing] but… I suppose in revealing my agenda, moment-by-moment you'll perhaps realise that it, in some sense, has to do with sharing one's experience in the moment.

My faltering speech betrays, I think, with hindsight, things going on in me, at subliminal levels, which interfered with the flow of words on the surface level - what Julian Schnabel referred to earlier as 'simultaneity'. And in this quotation you can see me attempting to model moment-to-moment congruence between my lived experience and my immediate expression. It became very interesting to see how my usual style-of-being became disrupted, quite markedly, when I began communicating with Jane. The morning after my conversation with Jane (conversation No. 9) I wrote the following:

29th November 2011
10:27/Tuesday

> After the camcorder stopped rolling, yesterday, I told Jane that I sensed an involuntary reaction to her, as I listened to her speaking. She said that she would not have guessed that, based on my surface behaviour. I told her that she reminded me of a previous girlfriend. […] Now whilst this did not find its way into the recording, it seems important to mention that the research volunteer impacted on me during the conversation. And I tried (in the spirit of my research agenda) to share that experience - albeit off-the-record. I genuinely did not set out to try to 'pick-up' this woman. Jane alluded to feeling a connection - that the words she heard me say, and perhaps the 'energy' I gave off, had a certain resonance for her […].

You will note that I didn't feel at liberty to share the particulars of my experience on-the-record. Subsequently, having broached this topic briefly with Nancy, one of my supervisors, she encouraged me to mention the 'elephant in the room', so to speak. I also spoke with Nancy about my having sworn at certain points, during certain research conversations. I felt ambivalent about the 'appropriateness' of including 'bad language' in my transcripts and write-up. Again, Nancy encouraged me to include the 'real life' exchanges rather than sanitizing my report. Thus you can see that I sought advice regarding the inclusion of certain research-conversation goings-on. I had to balance issues relating to empirical and phenomenological accuracy, along with the ethics-related notions of 'appropriateness' and 'propriety'. I faced these issues as they arose during research conversations, and during supervision, and they exemplify, quite powerfully, I think, the way in which one can feel constrained and conflicted about expressing certain sentiments, details, and content in the research process. We may describe such epoch-/culture-specific social norms as the 'reference values' that become 'internalised' within individuals, and

which contribute to ambivalent/conflicted states of being - such as I have describe here - when we fail to live up to them.

* * *

Bella (conversation No. 5, at 01:23:19) thought that she had spoiled my research by becoming upset during the conversation:

> Bella: No, I'm beginning to see the value of it. But five minutes ago I was thinking, this has just been terrible, you know, [Michael laughing] a waste of time. Michael must think I'm an idiot. [pause] But now I'm beginning to see that it has been valuable [pause] yeh.

And I felt ambivalent, after speaking with a disapproving colleague, about having shared what I did with Jane, albeit off-camera. This, I think, relates also to the conversation I had with Ruby (conversation No. 3) in which Ruby spoke about certain personal issues, pertaining to her relationships with other people and her lack of a core, stable, sense-of-self. It seems interesting that I, like Ruby, invoked the concept of 'research' to warrant and justify what I had said to Jane. I recall feeling somewhat driven to say what I said to Jane, but the 'research' agenda and context - especially given that my research specifically focuses on the problematics of communicating complex, multi-layered experiences - ultimately helped me to feel satisfied that I didn't speak inappropriately, or unethically.

* * *

The question of 'mentionableness' applies also to toilet breaks. Three out of the ten volunteers needed a 'comfort break'. Neil (conversation No. 2) at 01:18:00, for two minutes and twenty

seconds; Bridie (conversation No. 4) at 01:25:04, for three minutes and 40 seconds; and Bob (conversation No. 10) at around 01:35:30, for two minutes and 44 seconds. And of these three, Neil and Bob pro-actively initiated their own toilet breaks: Neil (01:17:56), "Excuse me Michael, would it be alright to go to the toilet?", and Bob (01:36:02), "Is there a toilet nearby Michael?" Bridie used the euphemism of needing a 'comfort break', whilst both of the men referred, to going to that 'place' called the 'toilet'. The details of our toilet habits, conventionally, fall outside the scope of what one would expect to discuss during a research conversation within a school of management; however, the toilet breaks created interesting hiatuses within my viewing of the audio-visual recordings of research conversations.

* * *

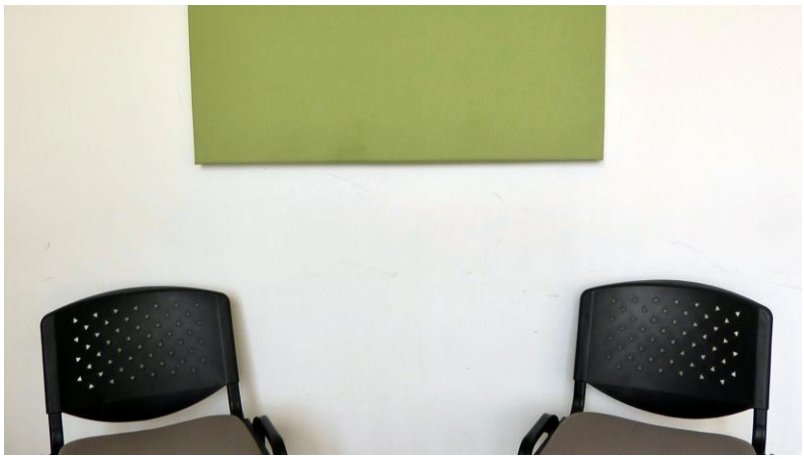


Figure 10.2 Toilet Break during Conversation No. 2 at 01:18:20

I left the camcorder running during the three toilet breaks. Whilst looking at the people-less screen [Fig. 10.2] on 28th October 2011, between 12:50 and 14:58 - during my first pass of the DVD recording of conversation No. 2 - I wrote, "I love this because it shows that the space exists even when we [Neil and I] exit it." This

image, then, serves as evidence that the configuration of chairs and the wall persist, even in the absence of the people who had, moments before, occupied the self-same chairs. However, as discussed earlier, until I present this visual data, in support of this particular way of thinking, and until these words and images get read and seen, then any 'meaning', in relation to the data, remains latent. The data requires human interpretation and contextualisation, for it to serve as purposeful 'evidence'.

Figure 10.3 Toilet Break during Conversation No. 4 at 01:25:28

Whilst looking at the people-less screen [Fig. 10.3] on 16th/17th January 2012, between 23:24 and 01:34 - during my first pass of the DVD recording of conversation No. 4 - I wrote:

> Empty seats - mine with jacket on back - bottles of water on floor. Some noises in the corridor [on recording]. 'Blue' behind Bridie's chair; 'green' behind Michael's chair. Aware of digesting-fish-&-chips. Thoughts of going to hospital with Mum tomorrow.

In my diary for January 16th 2012 I noted that I had socialised, with a friend, until ♎ 21:30, after which I note that I had eaten fish and chips outside the local church - which has a sheltered entrance door. My diary entry for the 17th January 2012 also corroborates

that I did, indeed, attend a hospital appointment with my mother in Leeds. I mention these diary extracts to underscore the idea that my 'extra-curricular' noticings, which occurred during the people-less passage of watching the recording of conversation No. 4, attest to the embeddedness of 'research' within the wider contexts of the researcher's [my] life. The food-related and hospital-appointment-related sensing and thinking, respectively, formed part of my moment-to-moment experiaction as I 'analysed data'. I, again, suggest that a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed orientation leads one to accept such seemingly irrelevant noticings as legitimate 'data'.

Similarly, on 09th/10th February 2012, whilst looking at the people-less screen [Fig. 10.3] between 22:53 and 01:03 - during my second pass of the recording of conversation No. 4 - I noted, "Holes in the back of Bridie's chair like the holes in Korzybski's Structural Differential. [Fig. 10.4] I could make a photograph or a freeze-frame?"

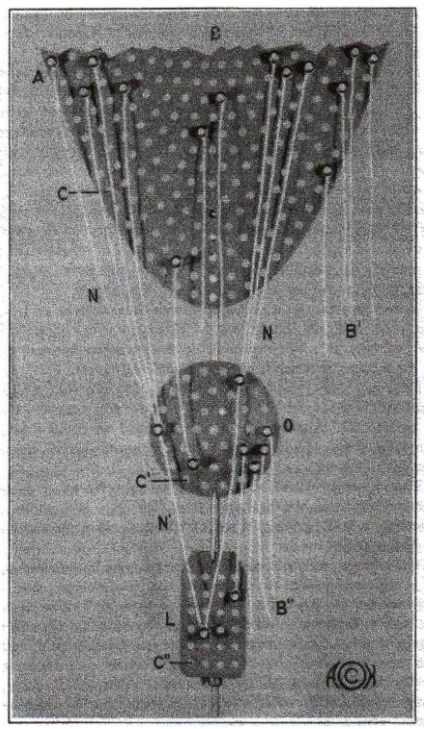


Figure 10.4 Structural Differential, Korzybski (1994, p. 388)

I mention this instance of associative thinking to demonstrate, once again, how my thinking during 'data analysis', went beyond the immediately-sensed 'outside world'. The 'A' in Figure 10.4, the colander-like shape, represents the "mad dance of 'electrons', which is different every instant" (Korzybski 1994, p. 387). Even a pencil, when examined scientifically, reveals a non-solid, mobile, structure. When a human being perceives a pencil s/he registers an object 'O', which constitutes a sensory abstraction from the 'mad dance'. The label 'L' stands for the naming of the perceived object 'O'. Korzybski wishes to convey that at each successive stage, of the process that he calls 'abstraction', characteristics/details get omitted. The holes with no strings attached, and the dangling strings, represent characteristics which don't find their way into the perceived object. Similarly, some of the characteristics and details of the perceived object don't find their way into the description/representation of the object. Korzybski's model, then, points to the 'non-allness' of the process of abstraction. The perception doesn't 'contain' everything 'out there', and the description doesn't 'contain' everything about the perceived phenomenon. Korzybski encapsulated this way of thinking by imploring us not to confuse the 'map' with the 'territory'.

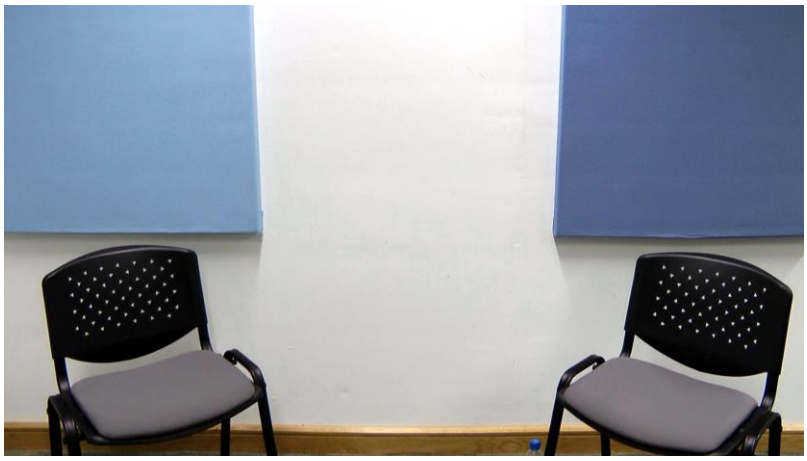


Figure 10.5 Toilet Break during Conversation No. 10 at 01:36:21

Whilst looking at the people-less screen [Fig. 10.5] on 16th/17th February 2012, between 22:45 and 00:41 - during my first pass of the DVD recording of conversation No. 10 - I mused, "What goes on whilst at the loo?" Although toilet breaks occurred during three of the ten research conversations, the details of what occurred in the toilets falls outside of what gets reported here. Bradshaw and Canniford (2010, pp. 201, 209) write:

> The average person spends 3 years of their lives on the toilet […], yet this universal activity is rarely mentioned or discussed in the company of others […]. Whether it be bodily waste or otherwise, we are trained to flush or throw away what is unwanted into holes where we may forget the presence of material that makes us uncomfortable.

We adhere to culturally-ingrained parameters, such as normalized notions of 'public' and 'private' actions. Animals, by contrast, do not [as far as I know] enter designated, gender-segregated, spaces specifically designed for excretion management. I should, perhaps, also note that some inebriated [and/or desperate] individuals with their, consequently, reduced levels of social propriety, also behave in this 'anti-social', 'animal-like' manner. Generally speaking, though, our personal, toilet-related goings-on do not form part of research conversations conducted in schools of management. A differently-framed conversation, taking place within, say, a hospital, may well include reference to urine and the like. Still, embarrassment may accompany even such 'legitimate' conversations. Comedians, typically, have license to challenge social taboos; such comedic transgression may lead us to laugh in recognition and, perhaps, mild-embarrassment.

10.2 Concluding

In this chapter I have considered some issues arising out of the notion of regulating expression and I have considered some of the naturalised 'reference values' which work, behind the scenes, so to speak, informing our conduct as we benchmark our current experiences against 'preferred', 'desirable', or 'expected' ways of being. I suggest that a similar kind of dynamic occurs at the writing-up stage [i.e., here] as I decide what I can and cannot include within a 'container' called a 'data analysis chapter'. As in the cases of countries, cities, buildings, rooms, and bodies; we can think of a text, such as this one, as having an inside and an outside. Writing a thesis entails the regulation of: (1) what gains 'access' into the body of a text, (2) the way that the contents of the work get sequenced or 'configured', (3) the 'levels' of, for example, self-revelation, word-count, the constancy of 'tone', and the density of the prose, (4) the 'association with' (and 'dissociation from') certain theories, philosophical traditions, places, and authors, and, finally, (5) the strategic, rule-informed, 'expressing' and/or 'withholding' that characterise the writing process. I have shown that attempts to transcend prevailing norms can engender uncertainty, and that such uncertainty can lead one to act in ways calculated to reduce that uncertainly. Thus the pronouncements of an academic supervisor can, in some cases, assuage such norm-transgressing-fuelled concerns; at other times, pronouncements by the same supervisor may serve to inhibit student-behaviour that strays *too far* from the norms. The five 'themes', that I have explored in the last five chapters, and which I have enumerated above, collectively constitute the regulable variables on which regulatory activities focus. In the following chapter I will show how the cybernetic theory and the regulable variables discussed in the preceding five chapters, apply to the world beyond the university.

Chapter 11: *Cosmopolis*

11.1 Introduction

This chapter will show how the notion of a 'consumption experience' seems a problematic denomination for what goes on during two documented cinema visits. The field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed approach - that I modelled both during research conversations and in this subsequent study - shows that people, including me, attend dynamically from moment-to-moment - subject to what catches their attention, interests them, and/or what accords with their prevailing norms and expectations. The real-time documentation of whichever aspects of my 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' momentarily come to my notice, tracks the goings-on that fall both inside and outside of a product-centric focus.

In chapter five, and intermittently during the last five ('data') chapters, I have referred to three different levels at which regulatory processes can occur. Firstly, at the level of Walter Cannon's 'homeostasis' (1939, p. 24) a term that originally pertained specifically to:

> The coordinated physiological processes which maintain most of the steady states in the organism […] involving […] the brain and nerves, the heart, lungs, kidneys and spleen, all working cooperatively […].

Cannon (1939, p. 28) continues:

> Each cell has requirements […]. The cells in our bodies, however, are shut away from any chances to obtain directly food, water and oxygen from the distant larger environment, or to discharge into it the waste materials which result from

> activity. These conveniences for getting supplies and eliminating debris have been provided by the development of moving streams within the body itself - the blood and lymph streams.

Secondly, I have discussed Perceptual Control Theory (Powers 2005), in which a person's own perceiving constitutes the controlled phenomenon. The person may act on, both, environmentally-located regulable variables, and on internally-located goings-on, in the overarching process of controlling what s/he perceives.

And thirdly, I have mentioned the ecological psychology level of regulation (Wicker 1979), which views 'behavior settings', such as cinemas, as, themselves, self-regulating systems. Such systems entail the maintenance of 'programs' [routine activities and processes] which the behavior-setting-system seeks to uphold. Program-maintenance involves agential human beings, in the form of staff and customers, who know the rules-of-engagement and who usually intervene to correct deviations from the particular 'program'.

Wicker (1979, p. 17) alludes to each of these three levels of regulation:

> The student is one level in a hierarchy of systems - one "layer" of the onion. At the next level down are the organs - heart, lungs, stomach, brain - that make up the student (or, more precisely, the person-system). Below that are the tissues that make up the organ. Working upward and outward from the student, the next level is the psychology-class behavior setting, of which the student is a component (just as her stomach is a component of her), and above that the college of which the psychology class is a part. As you can see, a system that is a component at one level is an environment at another level.

11.2 The Cinema Visits

On Friday 15th June 2012 I went to a late-night screening of David Cronenberg's film *Cosmopolis*, at the Vue cinema, inside The Light centre in Leeds city centre. I had use of my mother's car that night. Due to a medical condition my mother had had to temporarily stop driving. She allowed me to use her car during that period. I mention this point because without the availability of this mode of transport, at that point in June 2012, I would probably not have gone to that late night screening. The last train back from Leeds to Saltaire [where I live] leaves Leeds around 23:15; the screening didn't begin until 23:30. Since I didn't take notes during or after the screening of *Cosmopolis*, I have no record of what I noticed whilst watching it; however, I do remember that only a handful of people attended.

The Vue cinema complex resides within The Light shopping and entertainment centre, itself contained within the city centre of Leeds. I drove from one geographical location (Bradford) to another (Leeds). Boundaries exist between these two regions, usually marked by roadside signage. Similarly, when approaching the Vue cinema, one first enters The Light centre by crossing a threshold; this demarcates The Light centre from the rest of the city centre. Then one goes up an escalator, which takes one into the foyer of the Vue multiplex cinema. Having bought one's ticket in the foyer one moves from the foyer to the specific cinema where the movie, in this case *Cosmopolis*, gets screened. A Vue employee polices the boundary between the foyer and the individual cinemas, only allowing access to ticket-holders. [Fig. 11.1] I include this scan of the cinema tickets (a) as proof that I did indeed do what I say I did, (b) to foreground the commercial nature of the 'product' in question, and (c) because I find the image aesthetically pleasing -

like an Andy Warhol-style print. The cinema's toilets, available to ticket holders, constitute gender-segregated spaces; as children we soon learn which door [🚹 or 🚺] we can legitimately enter.

Figure 11.1 Receipts from Vue Cinema - Three Visits

The notion of regulation, and specifically the regulable variable of access, leads me to think of the way in which Vue cinemas regulate access to the spaces where they deliver their movie products. A movie constitutes an 'intangible' product in the sense that, at least when visiting a cinema, one doesn't take the movie home in a bag - unlike, for example, when buying a DVD from a supermarket. One can not move, unchallenged, from the street and into a cinema seat. A filmgoer must usually join a queue, buy a ticket, and show the ticket to a gate-keeping Vue-cinema employee. More generally, one must present as a non-disruptive, not excessively smelly, clothed individual. Thus, tacitly-agreed-upon standards of behaviour and self-presentation exist in this kind of setting. In a naturist cinema - if such establishments exist - one may get away with nakedness, but not at the Vue cinema in Leeds. If I had pushed my way past the Vue's gate-keeping employee, without

showing my ticket, security staff would have quickly appeared to either make me comply or to eject to me from the premises. The whole system runs smoothly, providing people stick to the 'program'. Wicker (1979, pp. 13-15) writes about the self-regulating processes in 'behavior settings':

> Within any behavior setting a number of specialized "mechanisms" act in concert to assure that the essential activities of the setting are carried out. A *sensing mechanism* receives information about events in the setting. For the most part, the eyes and ears of setting occupants serve this sensing function, although in some cases mechanical, electrical, or electronic devices may be installed to monitor aspects of a setting. Examples of the latter would be thermostats and smoke detectors. The sensing mechanisms in a setting continually monitor setting conditions. The information that they receive is relayed to an *executive mechanism* that examines the input to determine if what's happening in the setting is adequate (appropriate, permissible, non-threatening). Generally, the executive function in behavior settings is located in the brains of the setting occupants, but some kinds of decisions about adequacy can be made by non-human components, as when a thermostat "decides" that the air is too cold. […] [I]f some event should be seen as a threat to the setting's program or to a person's satisfactions in the setting, *maintenance mechanisms* may be "switched on." That is, people decide that something must be done about the problem, and so they take action to return the setting to normal […] a *deviation-countering mechanism*.
>
> A second kind of maintenance mechanism is *vetoing.* In this case the source of the threat or disruption is ejected from the setting. […]
>
> He [Roger Barker] proposes a closed loop cycle of events that depend upon information feedback. Attempts to deal with a threat to a setting are not left dangling; the effects (if any) of the actions taken are monitored by the sensory mechanism and evaluated by the executive mechanism. […] Unsuccessful attempts to correct a threat to the setting will be monitored and evaluated, and further attempts will be made to deal with the problem until corrected.

It seems to me that what pertains in the macrocosm of a multiplex cinema also applies in the microcosm of, say, producing this chapter. If, for example, I found myself pushed for time and yet inundated with distracting phone calls, I might take the phone off its hook, thereby managing potential program-interrupting phenomena.

* * *

Prior to going into the 'screening room', [as distinct from other parts of the 'cinema' - such as the foyer and the toilets] to watch the movie, I would have emptied my bladder and cleaned my glasses under running water, as I usually do. I once saw a movie called *Cinemania* (2002), about movie addicts/enthusiasts who, as part of their ritual, clean their glasses prior to screenings to optimise viewing clarity. Some of the people featured in *Cinemania* reasoned that since film-makers and projectionists usually go to great lengths to produce high-resolution imagery, it seems remiss of movie-goers to watch movies through dirty spectacle lens. Emptying my bladder and cleaning my glasses constitute regulatory behaviours - the 'expression' of body waste and the removal of the unwanted residues from my spectacle lens. In the latter case the misplaced matter on the lens gets washed down the sink with running water. I then remove the water residues from my specs using the hem of my shirt.

* * *

Upon entering the appointed screening room, I positioned myself relative to the screen. I see this as a 'configurational' issue. Obviously I can not, nor would I want to, sit behind the screen, or hang from the roof of the screening room like a bat. The very

design of the screening room delimits the range of alternative vantage points available. However, unless two individuals shared the same body (and hence the same set of eyes), each spectator has a unique point-of-view. This brings me to the very heart of my thesis. We can map, exactly, where a person sits within a screening room, within a cinema complex, within a shopping/entertainment centre, within a city centre, within a county, within a country, on a planet, within a universe - itself, perhaps, part of an encompassing 'multiverse' - at a particular point in time. And so, we exist at 'mapable' points in space-time. And I can provide evidence, in the form of a ticket, that I attended the said screening. Indeed, if the Vue cinema has CCTV cameras installed within its premises, then the management could even verify my attendance courtesy of that system. Scientists could, in experimental conditions, subject me to an MRI scan that showed which parts of my brain lit up at particular points during the screening of a movie. Other sensing devices could monitor my hear-rate and even which parts of the screen my eyes alighted on at any point in time. Yet none of this objective data would furnish the researcher with the particulars of my moment-to-moment subjective experiencing, as I watched the movie. Laing (1967, pp. 21-22) writes:

> It is quite possible to study visible, audible, smellable effulgences of human bodies, and much study of human behaviour has been in those terms. One can lump together very large numbers of units of behaviour and regard them as a statistical population, in no way different from the multiplicity constituting a system of non-human objects. But one will not be studying persons. In a science of persons, I shall state as axiomatic that: behaviour is a function of experience; and both experience and behaviour are always in relation to someone or something other than the self.

Rolf von Eckartsberg (1972, p. 166) says:

> "Experiaction" is a new term I use that combines experience and action. […] [Von Eckartsberg coins the term, "experiaction-in-situation" saying,] embodiment implies situatedness - experiacting in a context which is a physical locale and the socially-defined meaning that is associated with the locale.

Wicker's (1979, p. 18) sentiments accord with those of von Eckartsberg [above] when he writes, "People in drugstores 'behave drugstore,' for example; they do not behave 'post office' or 'swimming lesson.'" Here we have the related notions of (a) the essential privateness of moment-to-moment experiencing and (b) the normative expectations (within particular cultures) associated with particular contexts and activities.

In short we can verify, objectively, that I sat in a particular seat, in a particular cinema, on a particular day. And we may even correlate my heartbeat and other bodily goings-on with particular sections of a movie (Rothwell *et al* 2006, p. 105), or notice that such-and-such region of my brain 'lit-up' on a MRI scan, at a certain point as I watched a movie. But none of these measures furnish the researcher with my lived experiencing itself. It seems evident that in order to more-exhaustively map existential goings-on, one must account for the subjective experiencing of embodied beings. Von Eckartsberg (2010, p. 259) puts it this way:

> [If] I trace the path of my body through town on a city map, this is only a very general characterization of my experience. As viewed from my actor point of view, it is, indeed, true that I moved through town, but the crucial concern for me is: What did I pay attention to, what did I see, hear, feel, etc.? The observer can never fully fathom what this moving through town meant to me personally. All of my perceptions, for instance, are given solely to me and unless I tell about them to the observer, they remain private - linked to my total stream of meaningful experience, which includes all of my past.

And so, by recording my noticings (some of them at least), along with the particular times of those noticings, I can produce a more complete mapping of my experiactional goings-on. Since I didn't keep a viewing-log, as I watched *Cosmopolis* on Friday 15th June 2012, I can not say, over a year on, with any accuracy, what I noticed whilst watching it - although I did write the following in my diary:

> I then took my Mum's car and drove to Leeds - to the 23:30 screening of *Cosmopolis* - David Cronenberg's latest film - which I have looked forward to [for] many months.

I attended that screening as 'a regular cinema-goer' rather than as 'a researcher'. At the time of that particular jaunt I had not decided to visit the Vue cinema twice-more and to use those visits in relation to a chapter of my thesis. However, during my two subsequent visits to the Vue cinema in Leeds, on the 16th and 18th June 2012, respectively, I went to watch *Cosmopolis* with my, proverbial, researcher's hat on. I created viewing-logs, using the same printed forms that I had designed for use when analysing the DVD recordings of research conversations. [See chapter 4] I also created sets of meta-notes when reading each viewing-log the day after each of the cinema visits. My wife accompanied me to the Monday 18th June screening, hence the appearance of two tickets for the Monday 18th screening [Fig. 11.1].

Just as, whilst watching *Cosmopolis,* I sat in a particular seat in a specific screening room, within a certain multi-plex cinema, in a particular city etc., likewise, as I write these words, I sit in a particular bed, in a particular room, within a particular apartment, within a particular apartment block within a particular village etc. Thus the same kind of space-time-specificity exists whether one

watches a movie or subsequently writes relatedly. In other words, whether watching a movie over a year ago, or writing about the episodes now, I did/do so at particular space-time coordinates. And, importantly, I notice(ed) 'things' whist occupying those particular coordinates. I host(ed) a stream of consciousness that co-exists/co-existed with my overt (palpable-to-others) actions.

On the one hand I have two viewing-logs pertaining to two cinema visits that occurred over a year ago; on the other hand I find myself now, as I did back then, located in a particular context, although now writing (with hindsight) about those two cinema visits. Although the focus of my current experiaction has shifted from 'movie viewing' June 2012 to 'data analysis' Nov., 2013 it seems to me that each respective setting affords me the opportunity to experiact-in-situ. So although 'me'2012 differs from 'me'2013 - and my experiencing, actions, and the situations referred to in the 2012 scenarios differed from the experiencing, actions, and context whilst reading/typing now - 'I' nonetheless necessarily, experiact at/in whichever context I find myself co-constituting. For me, the key questions become, What do I experience and do at any particular juncture? What does my experiaction-in-situ comprise of? These questions point to the 'content', the very 'stuff', of my life as I participate therein.

As a student of experiaction-in-situ, how can I ignore the acts and experiencing that I sustain now, whilst writing (16:29 Monday 06th May 2013)? [Now, 20th November 2013, as I revisit the chapter?] {And now, 24th November 2013, as I key-in the hand-written proofing that I completed on the 20th November 2013?}.

* * *

> Is this the "real" lived experience, my typing this right now, this very second? This is silly. I reflect and start typing, and the reflection is already replaced by the typing experience.
>
> - Ronai (1992, p. 104)

* * *

The preceding five 'data analysis' chapters constitute, in part, an attempt to theoretically and methodologically address this difficulty of writing about various past and current events in a continually shifting present.

* * *

My current experiaction-in-situ, in relation to David Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis*, entails an additional complicating layer. On 23rd November 2012, at 21:36, I drove to a fairly-local branch of Sainsbury's supermarket, in Bradford, and bought a DVD copy of *Cosmopolis.* [Fig. 11.2] In my diary entry for that day I wrote, "I then drove to Sainsbury's to buy *Cosmopolis* (£9.99). I watched *Cosmopolis* between about 22:30 [and] 00:15."

Sainsbury's

BRADFORD : 01274 614820

Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd
33 Holborn London EC1N 2HT
www.sainsburys.co.uk
Vat Number : 660 4548 36

*JS CALWATER 2L	£0.45
JS TRY ME SMKD SALMN	£2.39
JS SPGHTTI BOLOGNESE	£0.59
FD SD & CRL PITTA X6	£0.99
PRN MAC SPTOM	£1.39
HZ VEGETABLE SOUP	£0.89

THINK 25 Cashier Confirmed Correct Age

*COSMOPOLIS DVD	£9.99
7 BALANCE DUE	£16.69
VISA DEBIT	£16.69

[ICC] **** **** **** 9723
AID:A0000000031010
ISSUE NUM. 02
ISS. DATE: 03/10
EXP. DATE: 03/13
MERCHANT 7181282
Auth Code = 397870

PIN Verified

CHANGE £0.00

****
WITH NECTAR YOU WOULD HAVE EARNED:
POINTS 32
REGISTER AT www.nectar.com
****

PLEASE KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS
Published Terms and Conditions apply

C0452 #0218 21:36:37 23NOV2012
S00814 R014

Based on price perception data, you can live well for less than you thought at Sainsbury's. For more information go to

sainsburys.co.uk/livewellforless

Thank you for shopping at Sainsbury's

Figure 11.2 Receipt for *Cosmopolis* DVD

* * *

On the 02nd December 2012 I wrote in my diary, "I also scanned the *Cosmopolis* DVD cover [Figures 11.3a & 11.3b] along with the receipt from Sainsbury's where I bought it - both sides of each item."

* * *

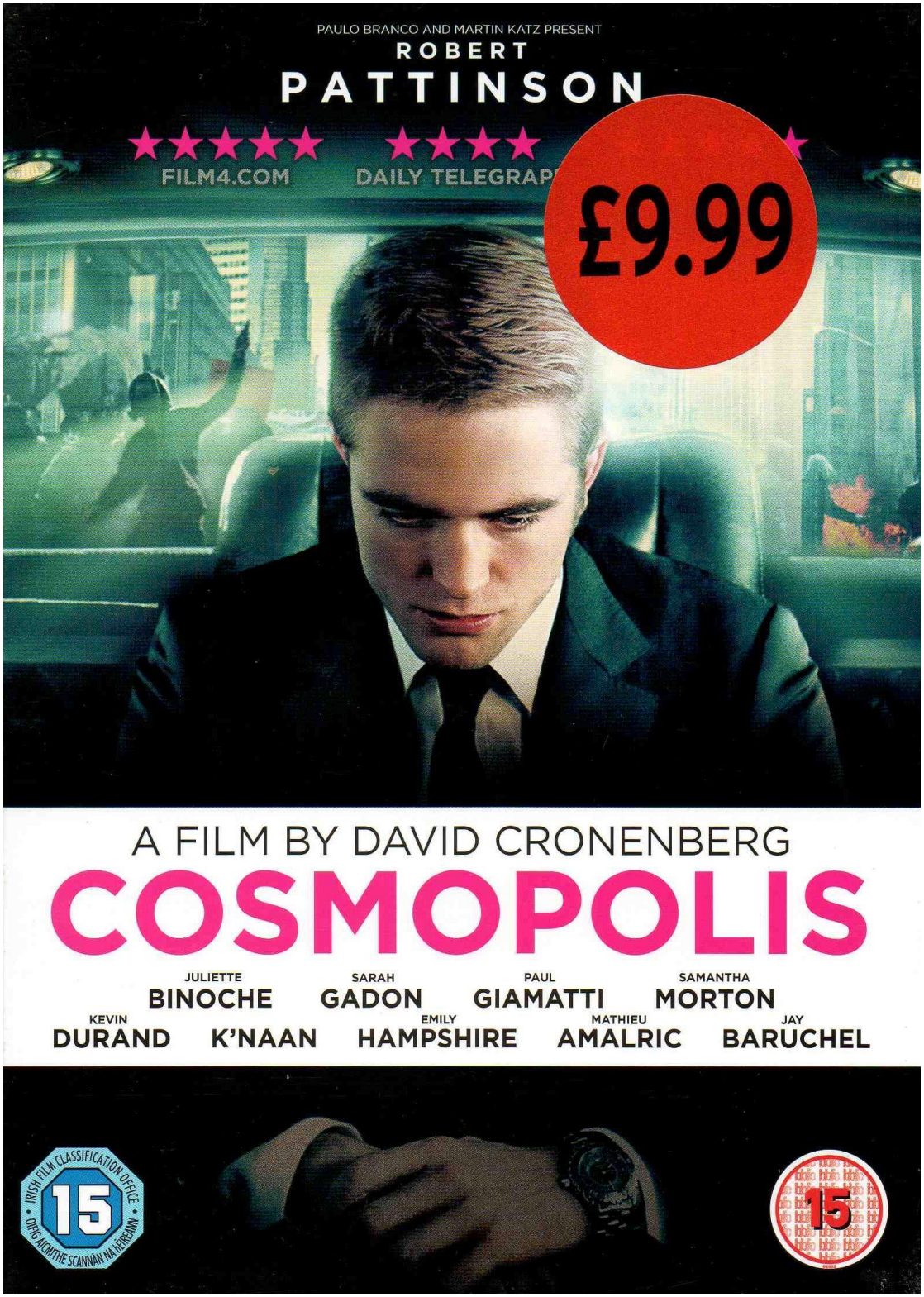


Figure 11.3a DVD (Front Cover)

Figure 11.3b DVD (Back Cover)

* * *

In anticipation of beginning to write today, last night (Friday 03rd May 2013) I re-watched the *Cosmopolis* DVD.

* * *

Now (Monday 06th May 2013 16:46) I key in the handwritten text. Yesterday I watched the *Cosmopolis* DVD at double speed in order to find, and then transcribe, a number of quotes that I wanted to use in the forthcoming text. I mention all these details to highlight the fact that many 'now(s)', 'here(s)', and 'me(s)' contribute to the production of this text. And what one notices at a 'point-in-time' relates to the ecological matrix of that 'moment'. You will note that in what follows I will honour the singularity of each set of noticings, so as *not* to collapse distinct context-specificities into a seamless constructed unity.

* * *

Now (Saturday 04th May 2013, 16:10) I want to try something. I have before me the two viewing-logs that I created in June 2012, whilst watching *Cosmopolis* in Leeds. I want to create a real-time 'composite-viewing-log', [See chapter 4] now, as I read-through, and reflect on, what I wrote in June 2012. I feel a bit tired, having written a lot already today, but I feel inclined to push myself a bit to get this job done before I break for a meal. This will entail reading through the viewing-logs that I produced back in June 2012, and noting what now seems salient, interesting, or, perhaps, problematic. This process clearly relates to my current priorities and sensibility, which may differ from what seemed significant when originally producing the viewing-logs.

In what follows the non-italicized text derives from the viewing-log that I created whilst watching *Cosmopolis* on Saturday 16th June 2012. The *italicized* text derives from the viewing-log that I created when I watched *Cosmopolis*, with my wife, on Monday 18th June 2012. In addition to creating the real-time viewing-logs, as I watched *Cosmopolis*, I also created (meta-) notes whilst re-reading each viewing-log after each respective cinema visit. I will also use material from those meta-notes, as appropriate.

* * *

- Material derived from viewing-log created on Saturday 16th June 2012, Vue Cinema (Leeds Light Centre) 20:50 Screening of *Cosmopolis* [Non-italicised text]
- *Material derived from viewing-log created on Monday 18th June 2001, Vue Cinema (Leeds Light Centre) 18:10 Screening of* Cosmopolis *[Italicised text]*
- [Material added subsequently - set between square brackets]

* * *

Seat F9 - aisle seat - the only one with an embedded blue floor-lamp nearby, that enabled me to consult my clock whilst creating my viewing-log. [My choice of seat related to me procuring sufficient ambient light to enable me to consult the digital clock that I took with me so I could record the times of my noticings.]

21:04 A trailer for *Chariots of Fire* [1981] screened. I think 'they' have re-released it to capitalise on Olympics-fever. [The Olympic Games took place in London in 2012.] When I worked at a salon near the Alhambra theatre, in Bradford, I once cut Ian Charleson's hair - one of the stars of the movie *Chariots of Fire*. He

appeared at the Alhambra in a play called *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.* He wanted an American 'flat top' haircut - which I felt well-qualified to give him. [Here you see me 'associating' with a dead celebrity. Charleson died of AIDS.]

18:25 I tell my wife the Ian Charleson anecdote.

21:05 A trailer for *Killer Joe,* directed by William Friedkin - the director of *The Exorcist* [1973]. [I subsequently bought *Killer Joe* on DVD. Here you can see me relying on the Friedkin 'brand' as an indicator of quality in relation to his latest movie offering.]

♎ 18:27 Drinking Brecon Carreg spring water, bought in Leeds railway station en route to the cinema (£1.05). A young woman, in Boots chemists complained when I accidently caught her with my umbrella. [Her confrontational attitude impacted, negatively, on my mood, somewhat. Here you can see me identifying myself through my choice of beverage - you wouldn't find me buying a regular Coke for example.]

21:11 Certificate screen '15'. The title sequence reminds me of Jackson Pollock's style of drip painting and the soundtrack reminds me of a cross between the sound track of Cronenberg's earlier film *Crash* and some tracks by the group U2. [Here you can see me finding points of comparison/reference in relation to my then-immediate sensing. This points to the human facility to recall previously-heard music, and to benchmark immediate perceptions against those recalled compositions.]

18:31 My wife tells me that she wouldn't have wanted to attend a Sunday night screening (i.e., the day before). We had discussed that possibility early on Sunday evening.

* * *

[The movie has only just started, and already my wife has contributed some non-commercial communication that augmented whatever I noticed whilst watching the opening title sequence. My whilst-movie-viewing experiencing most certainly included noticings from 'outside' of the movie. How can I possibly call my-wife-whispering-something-in-my-ear, a 'consumption experience'?]

* * *

21:31 The main protagonist announces that he wants a haircut by saying, "We need a haircut". [I served an apprenticeship as a gentleman's hairstylist. This biographical fact triggers indistinct associations and encourages a degree of identification between me and the protagonist.]

21:15 "[…] the phenomenon of reputation is a delicate thing; *a person rises on a word and falls on a syllable."* [I 'grabbed' the first half of this quote on Saturday *and the second half on Monday 18:36*.] [Here (Nov., 2013) I feel reminded of recent instances of celebrities falling from grace in relation to cases of 'historical sexual abuse'.]

21:18 When asked why he has to go to the barbers shop rather than having a barber cut his hair in his office, the protagonist says, "The haircut has associations…" [Phone rings as I produce these notes; I speak with my wife briefly before resuming work at 16:36, Sunday 05th May 2013.] "… A calendar on the wall…" [Just as 'interruptions' occur as one watches a movie, so the process of writing entails all kinds of 'distractions'. However, we only call

these phenomena ‘interruptions’ and ‘distractions’ if we harbour an ideal (reference value) of focused ‘concentration’.]

* * *

Protagonist: A haircut has what? Associations. A calendar on the wall, mirrors everywhere. There’s no barber chair here, nothing swivels except the chair you’re in Shiner.

* * *

18:37 I notice that I HAVEN’T noticed the black dot on the screen that I HAD noticed on Saturday. [The ‘black dot’ comprised of an irregularity on the surface of the cinema screen, rather than a flaw in the movie per se.]

21:20 The protagonist’s wife says to him, “I think you are dedicated to knowing.”

* * *

Protagonist’s wife: You know things; I think this is what you do. I think you’re dedicated to knowing.

* * *

♎ 21:20 I notice the protagonist’s security guard has eyes that look “fucked up” - as if he’s had too much drink/drugs.

* * *

Protagonist: Any assault on the boarders of perception is gonna seem rash at first.

* * *

21:23 I notice the fish and chips digesting in my stomach. [Prior to travelling to Leeds on the train I had eaten fish and chips in the car park behind the Co-Op in Saltaire.]

♎ 18:41 I notice my wife chewing gum.

18:51 I feel thirsty - I drink some water

* * *

[As I read one of the *Cosmopolis* viewing-logs through now (Sunday 05th May 2013) I wait for something to catch my eye. Otherwise I would simply copy everything down. The process, then, entails 'reducing' the 'data', since it involves abstracting salient-at-the-point-of-reading-the-viewing-log noticings - just as the process of creating the viewing-log had, itself, entailed writing down salient-at-the-point-of-movie-viewing noticings.]

* * *

[My wife just rang me again to supplement what she told me earlier - I resume work at 16:51, Sunday 06th May 2013.]

* * *

21:25 Protagonist having sex with Juliette Binoche's character in his limo - I noted in my meta-notes (produced on 17th June 2012) that the screen-sex seemed "not convincing" and thus "un-erotic".

♎ 21:26 A technical note - I noticed that one of the scenes looked more 'grainy'. In my meta-notes I qualified this by explaining what I meant by "grainy", i.e., relating to an "inconsistency re image quality".

♎ 21:28 I noted, re Juliette Binoche, "not good legs". [Relative to my own preference/taste]

21:28 Protagonist and Binoche's character discuss some of Mark Rothko's paintings - the ones housed in 'The Rothko Chapel'. Binoche's character says, "[…] the Rothko Chapel belongs to the world." The protagonist retorts, "It's mine if I buy it." [Thus they have a conversation about ownership, and art-works as commodities.]

♎ 21:30 Binoche's character says, "I miss things" - she doesn't pick up on them - "I missed that - I miss a lot." [I noted this because it speaks to the notion of selective perception - something relevant to my thesis. We leave things out when apprehending the worlds within and outside of us. Furthermore, we leave thing out when we verbalize our non-verbal experiencing. Our representations omit certain details, and perhaps include details not present in the original referent. This links to Korzybski's 'Structural Differential' Fig. 10.4, chapter 10.]

21:37 Protagonist asks his doctor [The doctor has just got in the limo and started examining the protagonist], "What do we do about this?" - pointing to a mole on his left side - to which the doctor replies, "Let it express itself". [I guess I noticed this because it speaks to me of the body, itself, as expressive - quite apart from any human volition and conventional 'communication'.] The

[rubber-glove-wearing] doctor tells the protagonist, "Your prostate is asymmetrical".

21:39 I notice the veins in the security guard's eyes - the one whose eyes looked rough earlier. [This kind of detail does not show up on the scale of DVD viewing.]

19:00 I notice the security-guard's eyes again during Monday's screening - dilated blood vessels.

[I feel sensitive to this issue. I use Optrex® eye drop to manage the appearance of my own eyes - given all the reading and movie-viewing that I do. So you could call this one of my pet issues. In terms of my five regulable variables, this relates to regulating the 'level' of eye-whiteness.]

♎ 21:45 I notice a black dot on the screen - unfortunately. [I began to notice it more forthwith.]

21:47 I recognise the actress Samantha Morton - she acted in Spielberg's *Minority Report,* as one of the psychics.

19:04 I notice my wife looking across at me.

[At 10:11 - whilst producing my meta-notes on Sunday 17th June 2012 - my wife rang and talked about James Joyce's *Ulysses*. BBC Radio 4 had aired a series of programmes associated with Joyce's book.]

19:06 Guy in front of us laughs when the protagonist's wife says he smells of "sexual discharge".

* * *

Protagonist's wife: It's true you know, you do actually reek of sexual discharge.

* * *

♎ *19:07 I saw the black dot for the first time*. [I mean the first time during Monday's screening. You will note that I first saw the black dot during Saturday's screening at ♎ 21:45 - see above.]

♎ *19:09 I notice that Samantha Morton has clear eyes and "chunky calves".*

21:52 Protagonist: "[…] we still want what we want - we want a haircut." [I notice this repetition of one of the first statements that the protagonist makes at the start of the movie. When I first heard about the film *Cosmopolis* I registered the travelling-across-New-York-to-get-a-haircut 'plot'. And with my history as a haircutter (and having enjoyed all of David Cronenberg's films) this seemed a film for me.]

19:17 I hear people behind me, to my left, talking.

21:55 I notice the black dot again. [This has nothing to do with the movie, and it distracts me from the movie momentarily.]

♎ 21:56 Two young women walk out of the Vue cinema - the first people to walk out. I notice that the naked female security guard, on screen, has "big round nipples". She has sex with the protagonist in a hotel. [I feel somewhat stirred now (17:20 Saturday 4th May 2013) envisaging the scene.]

22:00 I noticed the female security guard's [Euphemism Warning] 'derriere' when she stood up. [I could, of course, edit out these noticings - I have already diluted them - but I include them in the interests of a higher degree of phenomenological inclusiveness.]

* * *

Protagonist: She notices herself, then other people notice her. Then she marries one of them and they go to dinner.

[The scene changes to the interior of a restaurant.]

P: You're wearing a […] cocktail dress.

Wife (of P.): Yes.

P: It's navy blue.

W: Yes.

P: And that's your silver […] jewellery.

W: Yes it is.

P: I'm noticing. How was the play?

W: I left at [the] intermission didn't I?

P: What was it about and who was in it? I'm making conversation. […] Look I'm trying to make contact in the most ordinary ways. To see and hear. To notice your mood, your clothes. […] This is good; were like people talking. Isn't this how they talk?

* * *

[This snippet of dialogue felt so appropriate to me, since my PhD research relates strongly to the act of noticing. The protagonist notices himself noticing things about his wife; apparently 'normality'

seems alien to him. And, of course, I notice the protagonist noticing himself noticing his wife - and you, as reader, notice me noticing the protagonist noticing himself noticing his wife.]

♎ 19:26 I notice the out-of-focus candles in the background of the restaurant scene.

[At one point I noticed that the protagonist's degree of beard stubble seemed to fluctuate between one shot and the next - even though all of the film's action supposedly takes place, chronologically, during the same day. This seemed like a continuity error.]

19:27 I have a drink of water; my wife gestures to give her a drink. The plastic bottle crackles. [Whilst keying in the handwritten draft right now (00:10 Tuesday 07th May 2013) it occurs to me that whilst the on-screen husband and wife had their restaurant scene, my wife and I had our own little water-drinking scene in the 'real world'.]

22:07 Someone else walks out of the Vue cinema

22:09 Protagonist says, "Why can't I work up any curiosity on the subject?" - apparently thinking aloud.

[Whilst creating my second set of *Cosmopolis* meta-notes, at home, (19 June 2012 at 12:00) the weekly fire-alarm-test sounds.]

22:11 Another guy walks out of the Vue cinema.

19:32 My wife whispers, to me, that the protagonist has the facial features of a young Elvis. [I didn't hear the word "Elvis" properly when she first said it, but I checked this detail with her at 20:17, during the closing credit sequence.]

* * *

Pie Thrower: I'm an action painter of creamed pies.

* * *

22:13 In my meta-notes I write a note to myself suggesting that I start each entry with the words, 'I notice…'.

22:22 Another guy, in denim, walks out of the Vue cinema - he returned a while later.

22:23 I notice the markedly "inexpert" haircut given to the protagonist by the barber. Protagonist leaves the barber shop before the barber has finished the haircut. Barber: "But both sides aren't equal". [Now, whilst producing the handwritten draft of the text 'now' before you, I make a link between the asymmetry of the haircut and the asymmetry of the protagonist's prostate, as flagged up during the medical check-up in the back of the limo earlier.]

[Whilst creating my meta-notes the blue pen runs out, so I open a new pack of Bic® pens. Commercial products and non-commercial goings-on occur in concert and contribute to full-blown 'experiaction'. But why would the commercial discourse trump the non-commercial? Why would I call a strip of experiaction a 'consumption experience' when it so clearly comprises of a ragbag

mix of disparate constituent elements, both commercial and non-commercial?]

♎ 22:25 A scene outside of an underground garage triggers echoes, in me, of the earlier Cronenberg film *Crash* - about cars etc., and also Cronenberg's film *Existenz* - which has a scene, with Willem Dafoe, set in an isolated garage.

♎ 22:30 I notice that the protagonist looks very thin and, a bit later, I, again, notice the protagonist's badly cut hair.

22:39 Guy with checked shirt leave the Vue cinema. [He returns later.]

♎ 22:40 I note that the movie [*Cosmopolis*] forms only a part of the three-dimensional 'movie' that I, concurrently, play a role in whilst viewing *Cosmopolis*. As Aztec Camera (1990) put it, "Life's a one-take movie".

22:41 Stalker: What does anyone imagine? 100 things a minute.
19:58 Stalker: Whether I imagine things or not, it's real to me. [The last two quotes constitute one continuous quote, although I 'grabbed' the two halves of the quote during each of my 2nd and 3rd viewings of the movie at the Vue cinema.]

♎ 20:03 I notice the black dot on the screen again. [It remains there all the time, of course, but it stands out more to me at certain moments.]

22:41 Protagonist says to Stalker: "You're forcing me to be reasonable; I don't like that."

* * *

> [MNW. I've recently watched David Cronenberg's latest movie, *Cosmopolis*, three times. At one point the protagonist says, something like, 'You're forcing me to be reasonable' – I feel that way towards you today.]
>
> *{{MBH. It's a great day for feeling that way.}}*
>
> - Woodward and Holbrook (2013, pp. 341-342)

[Here I highlight how a movie-text-noticing finds its way into an email exchange, which, in turn, became a journal article.]

* * *

20:11 I notice a handbag getting zipped behind me. [On 02nd May 2013 my wife and I went to Valley Parade to watch Bradford City lose 3-2 in the first leg of a play-off. I heard coarse expletives coming from behind us that night. Whether one hears a handbag zipper or coarse expletives doesn't alter the fact that those 'noises' augment the 'vendor-produced entertainment offerings' - the movie and the football match respectively. The zipper and the expletives contributed to the goings-on in the three-dimensional settings in which we watched the movie and the football match respectively. These strike me as clear cases of the interweaving of commercial and non-commercial phenomena in relation to particular instances of momentary experiencing.]

20:11 My wife looks at her watch - why?

22:48 The stalker, like the protagonist, also has an asymmetrical prostate gland. [Right now (01:18 Tuesday 07th May

2013) whilst keying in the penultimate (16th) page of the first hand-written draft of this chapter, I recall something that the clothes maker Yohji Yamamoto - who I quoted in an earlier chapter - said. He finds asymmetry more beautiful than symmetry. He likes to subvert precision (my paraphrasing).]

* * *

> I think perfection is ugly. Somewhere in the things humans make, I want to see scars, failure, disorder, distortion. If I can feel those things in works by others, then I like them. Perfection is a kind of order. Like overall harmony, and so on… They are things someone forces onto a thing. A free human being does not desire such things. And yet I get the feeling there are a lot of women who do not seek freedom: women who wear symmetrical clothes.
>
> - Yohji Yamamoto quoted in Washida (2002)

* * *

22:51 A guy from the row behind me leaves. I look round and have eye-contact with him. Why does he leave so close to the end of the movie?

22:52 I notice the "music building" in intensity. ['Levels']

20:15 Stalker: "I wanted you to save me".

22:55 End credits start. I notice details from Mark Rothko paintings in end title sequence.

20:16 My wife says, "These are Rothko paintings aren't they?" I nod.

♎ 22:56 People leaving. I notice the "Amazing big screen" - "immersive".

♎ 20:17 I say to my wife, "The opening sequence looked like [the work of Jackson] *Pollock". She says to me, "Yes, I agree"; followed (at 20:18) by, "I thought you'd write that down."*

22:58 Watching the end credits I notice Paul Elliot (Key Hairstylist). I wonder what he does from day to day - email him about the haircutting in the film? [I didn't] I make the following note, "I can't [legally] record the film per se, but I can record my own noticings - they belong to me." Staff guy comes in with ID round his neck. Another guy follows with a bucket and brush. They start cleaning the cinema before the film's end credits have finished - reasonable?

♎ 20:19 My wife says to me, "Have you finished now?" I reply, "I've finished when the film has finished."

23:00 The film finished exactly on the hour. [Saturday 16th June 2012] I then had to run to catch the last train home that left Leeds at around 23:15.

20:21 Film finished. [Monday 18 June 2012] *I notice my wife's stomach noises.*

* * *

11.3 Discussion

By adopting the model of 'experiaction', instead of the notion of 'consumption experiences' I have rejected the explicitly-commercial

discourse, in favour of a more humanistic, person-centred, orientation. Gould (1991, p. 195), when referring to consumption by ingestion, mentions "drinking an energy-giving vitamin drink". Whilst Holt (1995, p. 10), when referring to associative consumption, discusses how, "A variety of [consumption] objects are often used as symbols to mark associations with ephemeral events." However, the 'consumption' discourse begins to falter when we try to classify actions such as writing and painting as examples of consumption. In my dialogue with Morris B. Holbrook, (Woodward and Holbrook 2013, p. 326) Morris writes, "I agree that almost any consumption experience entails an aspect of production as well." Why, then, settle for one or the other - or even a fusion of them in the form of 'prosumption' (Kotler 1986b)? Why not drop the commercially-imbued binary opposition (production/consumption) and, instead, adopt the term 'experiaction'? Von Eckartsberg (1978, p. 200) described experiaction as:

> an interdependence-concept, a way of conceiving of the *unity* of experience and action in any given instance of life lived through, in any given situated human event.

I embraced the cybernetic negative feedback loop because the model includes 'experiencing' and 'action' as parts of an integrated system. [Fig. 9.5, chapter 9] The consumption concept has difficulty accommodating creative action. The verb 'to write' doesn't sit comfortably as a consumptive act. Pavey (2010, pp. 100-101) distinguishes between, "[v]erbs of consumption (*eating, drinking,* etc.) and verbs of creation (build, write, knit, etc.)". Similarly, Jackendoff (1996, p. 305) distinguishes between, "verbs of consumption and creation, for example […] a. Bill ate an apple. (consumption) b. Bill drew a circle. (creation)". Yes, writing and drawing involve the use of inscription instruments, and perhaps

paper, but surely, here, products support the overarching creative acts of writing and drawing? It seems, to me, skewed to describe writing as an act of consumption, and even more skewed to describe one's experiencing whilst writing as a 'consumption experience'. Writing (or drawing etc.,) conceived as experiaction seems, to me, far more fitting. Some artistic individuals have written about the creative process in terms which implicitly accord with a cybernetic negative feedback-loop model:

> Lived experience, as it unfolds in consciousness, is a constant process of correction. Not a correction in the sense of right or wrong or trying to record the true picture but correction in the sense of adjusting the picture based on the perceived change in the relationships between performers in a setting. Every stimulus attended to is a line of information added in the drawing process; each pass of the recording medium is a new layer that changes how the prior layers will contribute to an overall perception of the picture. As new impressions are received, new pictures emerge.
>
> - Ronai (1999, pp. 115-116)

> You see, one has an intention, but what really happens comes about in working - that's the reason it's so hard to talk about it […]. And one's instinct, whether right or wrong, fixes on certain things that have happened in that activity of applying the paint to the canvas. I think an awful lot of creation is made out of, also, the self-criticism of an artist […]. It's really a continuous question of the fight between accident and criticism.
>
> - Francis Bacon (Sylvester 2002, pp. 149, 121)

> This process - of inspiration-creation-contemplation-judgement-and correction or approval - is repeated again and again until the musical composition, or as the case may be the painting, or statue, or work of one of the other arts, is finished […].
>
> - C. J. Ducasse (1964, p. 111)

The five regulable variables, that I identified in my 'data reduction' process, constitute the (abstract) phenomena that a person can act on whist experiacting. S/he can regulate: 'access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'. Some of these variables seem more 'consumption-related' than 'creative'. 'Access', 'levels' and 'association', for example, may relate to paying to see staged events - like concerts and football matches ('accessing'). We pay to maintain a comfortable temperature in our homes ('level-managing'). And we often pay to become physically associated with certain brands, via buying products such as clothes and cars ('associating'). However, if we address the regulable variables of 'configuration' and 'expression', then, we move towards processes of creative juxtaposition ('configuring') and the search for the means by which to articulate our phenomenological and cognitive goings-on ('expressing'). It seems significant, to me, that people's expressing can often take the form of paying for access, and paying to become associated with this-and/or-that product or service. If we express ourselves through acquiring, appropriating, and associating-with commercial phenomena, then expression becomes more consumptive. Similarly, if the regulable variable of 'configuration' amounts to assembling commercial phenomena in 'personalised' arrangements then, again, our creativity becomes product-bound, service-bound and thus more consumptive-leaning.

By adopting a non-commercial discourse when discussing human goings-on ['experiaction' rather than 'consumption', 'production', or 'prosumption'] I wish to symbolically foreground human-being rather than commercial-being. To embrace and employ 'consumer-speak' encourages us to view life as an unending-until-death series of 'consumption experiences'. Holbrook (1995, p. 101), for example writes:

> People get up in the morning, start consuming the moment their toes touch the carpet, allocate their time to various consumption activities throughout the day, and continue consuming until they finally drift off to sleep at night, after which they confine their consumption mostly to dreams, pajamas, and bed linens.

You will note that the very term 'consumption experience' [an abstract noun] reifies the process of 'experiencing' [a verb]. (Roberts 1941, p. 543) invites us to:

> […] consider experience, in all its forms, not as a *thing* to be denoted properly by a noun but as an activity or process that can not without serious error be arrested and fixed in the immobility of a substantive but must be denoted by a verb.

Roberts continues (1941, pp. 543-544):

> The outcome of viewing experience as process will be that we shall be compelled to deny the reality of mental *contents* of any kind - of sensations, percepts, ideas, or data. We shall be obliged to deny them for the reason that nouns by their very nature and function conceal the fact that to experience - to sense, to perceive, or to conceive - is to act. The mind is an *agent*. Its essence is activity. If we freeze its activities into *things* to be denoted by nouns, we must provide for the "things" a location and a status. It is common to speak of them as "in mind." Such a spatial description, however, is metaphorical. It seems to me a bad metaphor, confusing and misleading. The mind is not a container. It is, I would repeat, an agent.

We often find marketers promising us 'the experience of a life-time', or 'a memorable experience'. But as Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 7) tell us, "The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions". Later (p. 9) they write:

> "Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" […]. Note, however, that we chose the word "phenomenological" rather than "experiential." This is

> partly because of the fact that we have found when many people encounter the term "experience," it often invokes connotations of something like a "Disneyworld event." Of course, the word experience has several other meanings as well, including previous interaction. However, to the extent that the word experience is intended in a phenomenological sense, we are comfortable with the terms being used interchangeably, as we have done on a number of occasions.

Thus 'value is always uniquely and experientially determined by the beneficiary'. A vendor cannot sell us 'experiences' or provide us with 'value' per se. We author our own momentary experiaction, perhaps employing 'value propositions' provided by vendors. However, I contend (supported by my Vue-cinema-visits and viewing-logs) that my moment-to-moment experiencing - both at the cinema and whilst subsequently writing about the cinema visits - derives from multiple and diverse 'value propositions', originating from both commercial and non-commercial sources. The manifold triggers and stimuli which contribute to my/our experiaction emphatically *don't* all derive from vendor's offerings. Yet it doesn't have quite the same 'ring' to say, 'Roll-up! Roll-up! Come and buy your experiencing'. And you know why? Because our experiencing already belongs to us; marketers can't logically sell us what already belongs to us. At most, marketers can promise us value propositions that will induce, in us, a mode of experiencing that we value/want. Successful offerings, then, more-often-than-not (in a target audience) enable the audience to achieve a mode of experiencing not readily achievable without the offering in question.

By accepting and employing the term 'consumption experience' we acquiesce to the deep colonization of human being by the logic and discourse of commercialism. If even our moment-to-moment experiencing gets branded as 'consumption experience' then the logic of commercialism has got us inside and out. Our subjectivity

has, nominally at least, become a product-like 'thing' prized by market researchers. And to try to use the term 'consumption experience' only in relation to commercial phenomena also proves problematic as I have shown in this chapter.

Chapter 12: Discussion and Theory Development

12.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will summarise my five data themes and exemplify them with some of my 'noticings' discussed over the last six chapters. In and amongst, and particularly at the end of the chapter, I will posit a customised version of the cybernetic negative feedback loop which models the underlying dynamics that account for the process of 'experiaction'. I will argue that this model offers a fruitful alternative to the notion of 'consumption experiences'.

12.2 Some Background

Over five years ago I set out, in good faith, to study 'consumption experiences'. However, in the course of reviewing the relevant literature I became increasingly convinced that my, then, 'object' of study amounts to nothing more than a re-branding of everyday human experiencing. I initiated an email exchange with Morris B. Holbrook (Woodward and Holbrook 2013), one of the founders of 'consumption-experience'-related research, in which I aired some of my misgivings about the use of the term 'consumption experience'. During that email exchange Morris conceded that the term 'consumption experience' does indeed serve to legitimise the study of subjective experience within the domain of consumer research. For example, Morris wrote (Woodward Holbrook 2013, p. 342) that he didn't know what I planned to do in the future, but:

> *If the answer resembles "consumer researcher in a business school," then I would encourage you not to strip your work of its consumption-related associations. Call this a money-grubbing career-oriented recommendation or whatever you want. But in this day and age of running the university*

> *according to a "business model,'' I think you'll find that various deans and school administrators will be all too curious to know how your work contributes to the bottom line. I have gone about as far as I think it is humanly possible to go in distancing myself from real-world business concerns. If you go even farther and claim that you don't even want to focus on consumers, I think that you may have trouble finding a comfortable home in the business-school community. To repeat, I am not expressing my own feelings in this matter. Rather, I am trying to describe what I perceive to be the feelings of those around me. If you feel that all this means that the university has abandoned its academic values, I agree wholeheartedly. But there's a reality out there that we need to face. Sad but, I think, true.*

Similarly, Stephen Gould - author of the edgy (1991) paper in which he discussed manipulating his "perceived vital energy" through "product use" and/or "nonconsumption activities" - replied to an email I sent him thus[8]:

> Suppose I were a professor in management or political science, it is very possible that I might speak of management or political experiences as part of my academic discourse. But I would also still have this additional perspective on experience or whatever we might label it.

I think I can fairly interpret this as Gould saying, indirectly, that, as a professor in marketing, he will very possibly speak of 'consumption experiences' as part of his academic discourse, whilst still having an additional perspective on experience. Here we see two prominent marketing academics discussing the way in which they employ marketing-domain-specific vocabulary of 'consumers' and 'consumption experiences' whilst also alluding to resisting a whole-hearted embrace of commercialism. Indeed Gould wrote, as part of the email exchange just cited, "I largely agree with what you are saying in terms of commercial colonization". This in reply to what I had written to Gould, "I don't want to allow my 'experiences'

[8] Gould, S. J. (2012), Email to M. N. Woodard, "Re: Your Views?", 23/05/12.

to become 'consumption experiences' as I feel that this accedes to the colonisation of the human realm by the commercial realm."

Even before the correspondence just cited, I had a choice to make. I either expediently upheld the discursive convenience of the term 'consumption experience', or I faced the uncertain implications of re-positioning the notion of consumption as a contributor to full-blown human experiencing, rather than accepting consumption as the nominal prime mover. The seeds of this alternative conception already existed in the existential-phenomenological philosophy that I had gravitated towards. One particular (already mentioned) idea caught my attention. Moss (1978, p. 86) writes:

> Perception and action are usually studied in isolation from one another. Yet, both neurologically and at the level of human action in lived-space, we discover that they are intertwined. To be underway in some action is to organize our perception towards some object, and inversely, to perceive a situation in the world is to be invited into active involvement in that situation. With every step forward, our view of the situation is adjusted; with every adjustment in our view, we are invited to step forward anew. Merleau-Ponty has called this continuous interplay between man and his world a *dialectic.* In this dialectic between man and his world it is difficult to distinguish strictly between perception and action […].

Here we see perception and action posited as inseparable aspects of one integrated process. Thus the actions of human beings serve to modify that which they subsequently perceive. Rolf von Eckartsberg's term 'experiaction' (1978, p. 200-201) offers an alternative to the commercially-imbued term 'prosumption' (Kotler 1986b). Thus instead of 'production' and 'consumption' combining to form 'prosumption, we have 'experience' and 'action' combining to form 'experiaction'. I felt frustrated when it seemed that 'consumer researchers' simply married the term 'consumption' to an

existing term 'experience' and by doing so created a domain-relevant 'object of study' even though nothing but the name had changed. I sought to clarify this exact point during my correspondence with Morris Holbrook (Woodward and Holbrook 2013, p. 327) when I wrote:

> So, to put a fine point on it: Can we use the terms 'full-blown, moment-to-moment, human experience(s)' and 'consumption experience(s)' synonymously? If the issue simply hinges on labelling, then I can rest easy.

To which Morris replied, "Yes! I do believe that ANY sort of experience is a 'consumption experience.'" So, as I argued in my literature review, some parts of the marketing, and consumer research literature gave me license to treat human interaction, itself, as a legitimate topic to study within consumer research, providing I employed terms such as 'consumer', 'consumption experience', and 'product(s)' in my accounts. Yet to characterize human relations in this way seemed problematic; 'human being' begins to play second fiddle to (nominal) 'commercial being'. To paraphrase what I wrote to Gould (re footnote, p 294), if we call all human experience 'consumption experience', then we have acceded to the colonization of the human realm by commercial-speak. And whilst I could take some solace from the fact that I need only employ this vocabulary when donning my 'consumer researcher' hat, I didn't feel that I wanted to give continuity to this politically-moot practice.

So I embarked on a series of video-recorded conversations with a view to exploring how a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed orientation might provide an alternative way of characterizing human experience and action whilst still under the auspices of 'consumer research'. Instead of accepting the existing

terminology I chose, from the outset, to reject the 'consumption experience(s)' label. By adopting von Eckartsberg's term 'experiaction' as my starting point, I began talking with research volunteers, whilst video-recording the conversations. It seems obvious that what people notice, from moment to moment, constitutes an important existential fact. As a co-constituting aspect of a 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field', a person may momentarily alight on any salient-to-him/her goings-on, anywhere in that 'field'. These 'noticings' relate to phenomena attended to - whatever catches a person's eye, ear, nose, tongue, or haptic sense. Additionally, a person may think and feel 'inner'-directedly, without focusing on tangible phenomena. Thus whilst conversing with research volunteers I followed my own noticings and, to the limits of my subjective sense of 'appropriateness' - a value-judgment informed by (culture-specific and 'epoch-specific) social mores and ethical norms - I participated in the flow of emergent conversations. Importantly, I didn't set out to answer any pre-determined, product-related, questions during the research conversations; instead I viewed each research conversation as a living example of inter-experiaction - two people experiencing and acting/behaving together. The video recordings, then, constituted representations of the kind of human activity that, according to some, we could readily classify as ongoing self-marketing, and 'consumption experiences', but which I chose to think of as inter-experiaction.

* * *

Having conducted the ten video-recorded conversations I found myself with around 18½-hours-worth of audio-visual 'data'. Applying the notion of 'noticings', I set out to systematically document what I noticed whilst watching the audio-visual recordings. Since, as suggested earlier, I may notice any aspect(s)

of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field', that I co-constitute, at any point in space-time, I saw the audio-visual data as just one (albeit significant) aspect of a larger encompassing data-viewing 'field'. Thus, whilst watching recordings of research conversations, I may have noticed something 'within' myself, as well as something on the monitor screen. Through a process of progressively documenting my noticing, I eventually ended up with the set of keywords which encapsulated a synthesis of my most salient noticings, written whilst viewing (twice) all of the ten audio-visual recordings.

Another person following the same procedure of 'data reduction' would, almost certainly, have arrived at a different set of keywords. I thus make no claims regarding the repeatability of the process in terms of the manifest results. However, the process provides a structured way of distilling one's own noticings in order to arrive at a list of key-to-noticer terms. My list of keywords, dominated by the term 'homeostasis' (and related terms), served as a starting point which led me - through related further reading - to the theory which would inform the creation of the five themes of: 'access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'. As I researched the concept of homeostasis it became clear to me that the cybernetic negative feedback loop provides the theoretical grounds for employing the existential-phenomenological notion of 'experiaction' as a replacement for the term 'consumption experience(s)'.

12.3 The Cybernetic Negative Feedback Loop

The cybernetic negative feedback loop (Fig. 12.1, below) brings together, in one unified model, both the experiential (perception) with the actional (output) aspects of human being. The list of keywords that I had assembled chimed with this cybernetic model,

although, at the time that I produced the keywords, I had not encountered the model. Starting with this rudimentary diagram I began to think of human beings as perceiving *and* behaving beings who, at any point in time, 'hold' certain 'reference values' - which we may think of as his/her existing 'infrastructure' of accumulated, gleaned-from-living, 'knowledge', including what s/he prefers, expects, desires, etc. Powers (2005, p. 65) defines the term 'reference value' succinctly:

> This reference condition is exactly what is meant by a *goal*, and the fact that it is not connected to any observable physical phenomenon is what caused behaviorists to reject the notion of goal-directed behavior.

Elsewhere Powers (2005, pp. 68, 69) refers to the "reference signal", and the "reference level" respectively - the former used in Fig. 12.1.

The negative feedback model invites us to visualize a process in which a current perception gets benchmarked against a person's pre-existent reference signal/value(s).

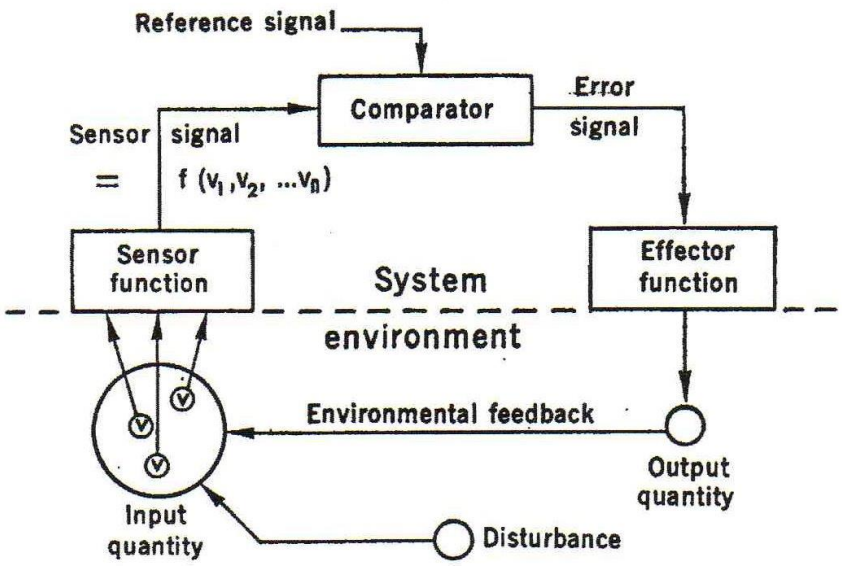


Figure 12.1 Basic Control-System Unit of Behavioral Organization, Powers (1973, p. 352)

This benchmarking process results in either a no-action-required 'signal' or a must-take-action 'error signal'. In a nutshell, if the incoming perception more-or-less matches the reference value(s) then a person's perception accords with what s/he expects/would prefer/desires [his/her goal state]. If, instead, his/her current perceiving fails to accord with his/her reference value(s), then the resulting 'error signal' drives action/behaviour calculated to alter the environmental (or inner-self) goings-on, in order to bring about a subsequent-to-behaviour-perception more in line with the person's reference signal/value(s). I have included this diagram mainly so that the reader can compare it to the customised version of the diagram that I developed (Fig. 12.2). I will give a fuller explanation of the specifics of the diagram at that point in the text.

12.4 The Five Regulable Variables

From this basic negative feedback model, then, I saw how I might structure my data analysis chapters. In particular, the five regulable variables, ('access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression'), that I developed from my keywords, constitute the phenomena that a person may act on as s/he seeks to control his/her perceiving relative to his/her goal-states or 'reference signal/value(s)'.

12.4.1 Access

Starting with 'access', then, I showed that individuals can, and do, regulate what enters certain controlled bounded spaces, whether (a) architectural, (b) pertaining to the human body itself, or (c) relating to various 'texts' such as this thesis. Thus, the desire to secure exclusive, undisturbed access to research rooms led me to manage access to those rooms. I did this through availing myself of

the room-booking system, and by using my activated student card to lock the room whenever I left it during my tenure. I also posted a sign outside the door, indicating, "QUIET PLEASE RESEARCH IN PROGRESS". Similarly, if we view the human body, itself, as a container of sorts, then we can also, by degree, manage (or try to manage) what gains access to our inner cavities. Reference values such as 'I want to remain/become slim' will (perhaps) inform how a person acts, and what s/he permits to cross the threshold into his/her stomach. However, the desire to eat the cake, for example, may trump the desire to remain slim, in which case conflicting reference value(s) jostle for satisfaction - manifesting, perhaps, in a sense of ambivalence within the person at this (hypothetical) choice point. In the case of texts, too, we may, for example, view a piece of writing as a container to which we can add (and from which we can remove) material. I suggested, therefore, that in regulating access to rooms, bodies, and 'texts', a person exercises degrees of control over what s/he perceives relative to his/her reference values or goal states. In these examples the reference values comprise, respectively, of wanting (a) exclusive, undisturbed access to suitably-equipped rooms, (b) wanting to become/remain slim, whilst also wanting sensory gratification, and (c) wanting to produce an academically valid piece of work. One may, then, act on the environment (and/or on the 'inner'-self) when one perceives one or other of these goal-states slipping from one's grasp. Had noise levels outside the research room reached problematic proportions - in terms of disturbing the audio-visual recording - then I would have taken remedial action. Research volunteers availed themselves of drinks of water, but only Bridie (conversation No. 4) ate (some apple pieces) during the research conversation. I suggest that, by-and-large, eating during a research conversation falls outside of what one would expect. Similarly, if I notice a lapse in the measured tone of my writing - say an inappropriate instance of

unsubstantiated hyperbole - then I will replace the offending material with something more consistent with the overarching tone.

12.4.2 Configuration

By configuring: (a) physical spaces, (b) our self-presentation, and (c) 'textual' objects, for example, it becomes possible to ensure that what we perceive, accords with (by degree) what we feel constitute appropriate, desirable, or expected configurations, at a given juncture. As a researcher I had certain preconceptions (reference values) as to what a research setting 'should' look like. My preparatory setting-up of the rooms, then, proceeded in a manner informed by certain aesthetic and functional criteria. I benchmarked the starting state of a room against these reference values and invariably found a mismatch between the actual state and what I wanted. I continued to re-configure each room until it accorded, more-or-less, with my reference value(s). When Alia (conversation No. 1), a senior lecturer, noted that the room looked professionally set up, she corroborated my own sense of what a research room 'should' look like. Similarly, as a researcher, one dresses 'appropriately' for the role. McCracken (1988, p. 26) suggests that, "A certain formality in dress, demeanor, and, speech is useful because it helps the respondent cast the investigator in the role of a 'scientist'". Irrespective of whether one aspires to a 'scientific' persona, [I don't] a researcher, minimally, wants to project an air of competence, and to this end s/he will present him/her-self in a (culture-specific) manner commensurate with this goal. One may think of this as a configuring of one's own physical appearance and conduct. Research volunteers must also configure themselves in the light of the on-camera research initiative. In particular, Paul (conversation No. 8) dressed in a dapper fashion and admitted to having made something of an effort to dress fittingly. And Matt (conversation No. 6) discussed having thought about his choice of

clothes, given the nature of the research context, namely, the video-recording, and the academic setting. Apart from research-specific considerations regarding self-presentation, I suggest that, at a more fundamental level, human beings adhere to codes of personal hygiene and context-specific conduct which guide preparatory bathroom habits, and modes of dress in relation to social occasions. Thus even before 'performers' step out onto on the research 'stage', they have spent time in their 'dressing rooms' physically and psychologically preparing for the 'performance'. I have also addressed how, for example, written texts lend themselves to reconfiguration, such that a writer may 'polish' a text, over time, to bring it into line with what s/he aspires to.

12.4.3 Levels

The regulable variable of 'levels' pertains to: (a) micro-environmental phenomena such as lighting levels, heating levels, and sound/volume levels; (b) intra-personal levels, such as hydration, body heat, and levels of self-esteem; and (c) the levels of, say, grammatical accuracy, tonality, and word count within a created text. When preparing research rooms for use I managed the amount of light entering the rooms, commensurate with the screening of the pre-conversation movie therein. Similarly, when the lights automatically went out, intermittently, during some research conversations, I immediately acted to reinstate the light level. I adjusted the volume level of the DVD player so that I screened the pre-conversation movie at a comfortable level. Each participant sipped form the bottle of water that I had provided - with the exception of Ruby who brought her own soft drink - thereby managing their respective level of hydration and vocal lubrication. When Paul (conversation No. 8) felt cold, he remedied the situation by putting on his winter jacket. On another occasion I contacted the School of Management 'Estates' department to try to

have the room temperature raised. And when I felt slighted, after Matt described something I'd said as "sloppy", (conversation No. 6) I sought to assuage my wounded pride by exploring, with Matt, the ins and outs of what I'd said. Matt gave his perspective, explaining his rationale for using the term "sloppy". Thus we can see, in these brief examples, how people monitor the existing state-of-play and if/when a particular monitored 'level' drops below (or exceeds) what one would prefer/expect/desire etc., then the negative feedback model predicts that people will mobilize - acting in ways calculated to effect the desired change in his/her subsequent-to-corrective-action perceiving. You will note that the regulable variables that I have identified constitute abstractions from the rough and tumble of lived complexity. Paul's putting on of his winter coat to maintain his body-temperature, for example, occurred concurrently with me closing a window in pursuit of the same objective. And the action I took to restore the room's lighting (after it had switched itself off automatically) coincided with my seeking to reassure the research volunteer who seemed perturbed by the lights having abruptly gone off. Thus separating regulable variables into five discrete categories belies the fact that in 'real life' one may concurrently regulate across all of the categories. For example, in relation to keying in these very words, I made sure that I ate before starting work - allowing food to enter my body, ('access') and concomitantly maintaining my energy ('levels'). I arranged my chair, script, and anglepoise lamp - securing ergonomically suitable working conditions ('configuration') - as well as configuring the text per se. I adjusted the level of heat within the room, to counteract the cold ('levels'). I ensure that the style of prose that I produce accords with what I feel happy to become associated with ('association'). And I decide which existential-phenomenological facts I share and which I withhold ('expression').

12.4.4 Association

When conversing during research conversations, participants (including me) mentioned: other people, places, organisations, 'objects', ideas, and the like. This selective mentioning of particular phenomena facilitates both the associating *with* and dissociating *from* the phenomena mentioned. Thus, in criticising the artistry of the cartoon-style drawing featured in the pre-conversation movie, Alia (conversation No. 1) dissociated herself (aesthetically) from a certain style of drawing and mentioned (associated with) the work of other artists whose work she admired. Similarly, by buying a Panasonic® digital video-recorder with which to document the research conversations, I thus became associated with a reputable brand. This association helped to reduce concerns I had regarding the equipment letting me down by failing to deliver the requisite audio-visual quality that I hoped for. I noted that the very location of the research, within the new wing of the School of Management, lent a degree of kudos to my project. To have reached the stage of actually conducting research I had gone through extensive selection/vetting, training, preliminary research, and ethics-approval processes. Thus the entire research project, occurring as it did within a credible institution, benefited from this association with quality. So, the processes of association and dissociation, together, constitute regulable variables that a person may manipulate in the course of conducting a research project. What, who, and where a person becomes associated with (and/or distances him/her-self from) thus serves to indicate [whether honestly or falsely], both to self and others, what the associating/dissociating individual prefers/values, and feels averse to.

12.4.5 Expression

Finally, in this round-up of the five regulable variables, I come to 'expression'. A person will choose to mention certain information whilst choosing to withhold other information (Goffman 1959 pp. 57-128). I argued that prevailing (epoch-specific and culture-specific) norms inform which information people feel at liberty to share. Bauman (2007, p. 3), for example, writes about today's:

> […] confessional society - a society notorious for effacing the boundary which once separated the private from the public, for making it a public virtue and obligation to publically expose the private, and for wiping away from public communication anything that resists being reduced to private confidences, together with those who refuse to confide them.

To have publically declared one's homosexual orientation, in the middle of the 20th century, would have resulted in even more fuss than a similar coming-out engenders nowadays. The internalized 'reference values' that a person holds, covertly contribute to a complex 'calculation' which determines what s/he expresses and what s/he withholds, in a given context. I showed how research volunteers, such as Ruby (conversation No. 3) and Matt (conversation No. 6), overtly cited reference values relating to academic practice as warrant for, in Ruby's case, a higher-than-usual-for-her degree of self-revelation, and, in Matt's case, his more-critical-than-usual appraisal of my "sloppy" expression. Here, then, the operative 'reference value' functions in a manner akin to the way that 'wearing a particular hat' does. According to Edward de Bono (2004, p. 93), "Hats are used to indicate roles - 'Wearing my police hat / my parent hat' and so on." Thus, with their, respective, 'academic-research-volunteer' hats on, Ruby and Matt felt at liberty to say things that, had they donned, say, their 'socialising' hats, they may not have said. You will note that, collectively, the five regulable variables provide a checklist, of sorts,

which enables one to enumerate the various phenomena that people may control (wittingly and/or unwittingly) in the course of seeking to actualise their goal-states or 'reference values'.

12.5 Field Theory and Data

The process of data analysis, for me, became more complicated on account of the pervasive reach of a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed orientation. In particular, I approached the watching of audio-visual recordings of research conversations from the same field theoretical, phenomenologically-informed perspective that I had assumed when conducting the research conversations themselves. Consequently, with my field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed 'hat on', I felt at liberty - indeed I felt it incumbent on me - to document *whatever* I noticed, during data analysis, whether research-recording-related or not. The key question thus became/becomes: Whilst conducting research in a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed manner, does one seek to restrict one's noticings to those parts of the 'field' which relate to the research conversations, or does one allow oneself a more free-ranging mode of noticing? It seems unquestionable that, as a field-theoretical, phenomenologically-informed researcher, I would have my sensory 'solar panels' wide open, to register whatever I had the capacity to notice whilst, say, in the company of a research text, such as an audio-visual recording. I think this particular issue has accounted for much of the ambivalence that I have felt around the process of 'data analysis'. Furthermore, I think this issue also goes to the heart of my challenging the notion of 'consumption experiences'. I will try to explain.

If one identifies a particular phenomenon as one's object of consumption (such as a movie or a portion of fish and chips) then one can easily fall into the trap of going in search of the experience dedicated to [or caused by] those designated consumed objects. My whole problematization of the notion of 'consumption experiences' stems from the fact that a specified consumption object does not solely give rise to whatever we think, feel and do whilst consuming 'it'. If, whilst eating fish and chips, one listens to a radio broadcast, and thinks about, say, one's impending thesis-submission-deadline, then we can't rightly describe that full-blown experiencing as an 'eating-fish-and-chips' experience. We could, at a stretch, talk in terms of an, eating-fish-and-chips-whilst-listing-to-the-radio-and-thinking-about-submitting-one's-thesis experience. But in doing so we then have to decide whether we can rightly 'bundle in' the non-commercial component of the experiencing - in the case of this example, the thesis-submission-deadline thinking - under the rubric of a 'consumption experience'.

If we apply this same mode of thinking to data analysis, then, we may identify the audio-visual recordings - of a series of research conversations - as our 'objects of study' - our 'data' if you like. In this way we implicitly expect the data analyst to focus on the designated data/object. But if one embarks on the process of data analysis wearing a 'field-theoretical-phenomenologist' 'hat', then, to limit one's noticings to designated-object-noticings breaks with the very perspective one claims to assume. If one's 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' constitutes one's only source of existential evidence (as I believe it does), and if one purports to want to study experiaction in the full-blown, all-encompassing sense, then, surely one must report on salient-to-self parts of that 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'? And yet, that 'field' comprises of a whole host of goings-on which extend beyond data-in-the-sense-of-a-designated-object. I

hope that I have expressed this in a way that carries over to the reader. But just to make sure - given the importance of this point to my argument - I will reiterate the point using different words.

If one identifies a particular phenomenon as an object of consumption - for example a television programme - then one may go in search of people's (or one's own) experience(s) of that programme. What did people like about the programme? What, in the programme, would they have liked to change? What did they think about the costumes, and the quality of the acting? In short, once we have identified the object of consumption, then we may go in search of noticings dedicated to that object - or perhaps people's 'consumption experiences' of that 'product'.

I approach this whole question from a different perspective. If one starts from a field-theoretical perspective, then, only the field-embedded individual can say to what extent a particular phenomenon monopolized his/her attention/consciousness. Only a field-embedded individual can say just what occupied him/her as s/he ostensibly watched a TV programme. To designate a particular experience as a 'TV-programme-viewing' experience, just because a person and a TV programme become juxtaposed in space-time, misses the fact that a person's experiencing comprises of whichever particulars become foregrounded in his/her consciousness from moment to moment. This full-blown experiencing may, indeed, have a high measure of TV-programme-relatedness, but a person's momentary experiencing doesn't owe its entire existence to the TV programme. Minimally a perceived TV programme comes into contact with the viewer's psychological infrastructure. This 'encounter' sets in motion his/her associative and/or dissociative tendencies in relation to the perceived programme. Furthermore, the particulars of the viewer's embodied state, as s/he watches a

programme, will contribute to the overall state a person finds him/her-self in.

In the previous, *Cosmopolis,* chapter, by documenting, in a field-wide manner, my noticings recorded during, and in relation to, two cinema visits, I showed that the film *Cosmopolis* constituted just one, albeit important, aspect of the 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field' comprising my contextualized, embodied, whilst-viewing-a-movie scenario. To call my experiencing and acting/behaving - whilst watching a movie - a 'consumption experience' implicitly posits the movie as the object that I consumed and which sponsored my whilst-watching-the-movie experience. This version of events means that any extra-to-movie noticings get rounded-up and roped-in to the overarching movie-viewing experience. Arguably, this co-opts whatever comes from outside of movie-relatedness and nominally groups it under the movie-viewing 'consumption experience' rubric.

A more nuanced description of the movie-viewing 'field' might acknowledge the mobility of a person's attentiveness, and may thus acknowledge the non-movie-related noticings and actions that co-constitute a person's full-blown whilst-movie-viewing experiaction. However, seen from a product-centric perspective, because the term 'product' has become so potentially broad in its applicability [see section 2.2.1 of this thesis] then *anything* that one alights on *whilst* watching a movie - whether movie-related or not - nevertheless constitutes a 'product', of sorts, and therefore one *necessarily* has a 'consumption experience', since all of the objects of consciousness constitutes 'consumables' of sorts. Thus, even if we don't have a dedicated-to-movie 'consumption experience', since every 'thing' comes under the category of 'consumable' we nonetheless have a 'consumption experience'. Gould (2008, p.

413), for example, writes about, "the consumption of light, energy, sound, sensation and thought, whether or not product related". And Addis and Holbrook (2001, p. 64) include in their list of 'products', "the automatic teller machine. The household pet. The personal computer. The Internet. The sun. The moon. The stars." This all-pervasive conception of 'consumption' and 'consumables' amounts to a total colonization of the subjective realm by the logic of consumption. Every 'thing' becomes a 'product' (or product-like) and every experience thus becomes a 'consumption experience', because nothing exists outside of the product-buffet that we live within and which we co-constitute. Thus people may consume each other as 'products' and individuals may consume aspects of their own physical/psychological selves. As Bauman (2007, p. 12) puts it:

> In the society of consumers no one can become a subject without first turning into a commodity, and no one can keep his or her subjectness secure without perpetually resuscitating, resurrecting and replenishing the capacities expected and required of a sellable commodity.

12.6 The Experiactional Model

By customising Powers' (1973, p. 352) diagram (Fig. 12.1, p. 299) I have created a representation that encapsulates the experiactional process that I have developed throughout this thesis (Fig. 12.2, overleaf). The PERSON and the ENVIRONMENT together form, what I have called, a unified, interdependent, 360°-'inner'-'outer'-'field'. A person's Sensing function (1) may register any perceivable aspect(s) of his/her environment. What the person senses at any point in time will not include everything within his/her immediate environment (6a). The various circled (V's) represent variables in the person's immediate environment. Some of the environmental

variables co-comprising any particular 'field' inescapably remain unperceived at a given moment; each individual has a less-than-360° field of vision and finite sensory capacities. Korzybski (1994, p. 238) tells us that:

> […] we are immersed in a world full of energy manifestations, out of which we abstract directly [via our senses] only a very small portion, these abstractions being already coloured by the specific functioning and structure of the nervous system - the abstractors.

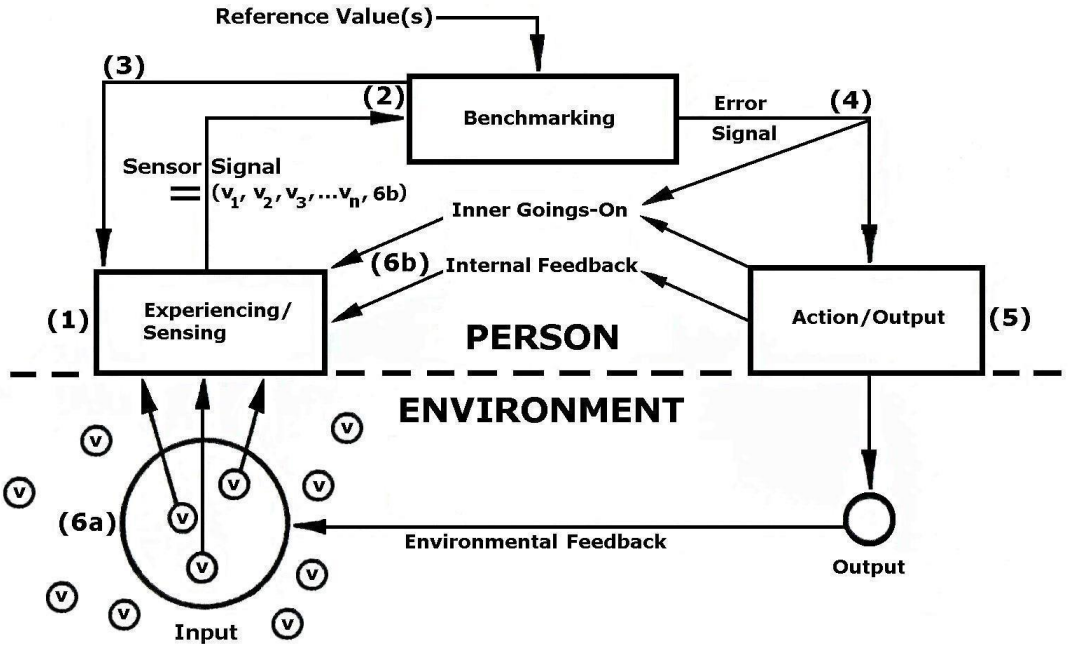


Fig. 12.2 Experiaction - Developed from Powers (1973, p. 352)

A person may also sense inner-directedly (6b). This may take the form of proprioception and/or self-aware thinking and feeling. For example, whilst watching *Cosmopolis* - described in the previous chapter - I proprioceptively sensed digesting-fish-and-chips in my stomach. I also engaged in thinking not directly related to the movie. I wondered, for example, why people had walked out of the movie before it had finished. This kind of extra-to-movie

experiencing augments and enriches the Sensor Signal deriving from perceived environmental phenomena. Powers (1973, p. 352) describes the Sensor Signal as, "an internal analog of some external state of affairs." According the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (11th Edition) the term 'analog' [USA] means, "relating to or using information represented by a continuously variable physical quantity (such as spatial position, voltage etc.) rather than digitally". The full-scale Sensor Signal thus potentially represents, concurrently, both environmental and 'inner-self' goings-on. This signal thus represents the perceived state of the dynamic PERSON-ENVIRONMENT 'field'.

The Benchmarking stage (2) postulates a meeting between the full-blown Sensor Signal and a person's Reference Value(s). The Reference Value(s) comprise(s) of the person's desired goal-state(s). The Reference Value(s) may comprise, variously, of, for example, what the person expects, his/her current desires/needs, and his/her sense of what would constitute 'appropriate' behaviour in the type of situation represented via the Sensor Signal. I have included an arrow (3) leading back from the Benchmarking to the Sensing function (1). This indicates that the Benchmarking process may lead the person to a classify what s/he currently senses, such that s/he adjusts the way s/he senses in line with his/her perceived definition of the situation. Thus, for example, if, when the Sensor Signal gets Benchmarked against a Reference Value(s), a person classifies the currently-sensed field-conditions as, say, 'threatening', then the person's sensory acuity may need up-grading to meet the perceived danger - his/her pupils may dilate, for example, to take in the maximum amount of available light. According to Powers (1973, p. 352) the Error Signal represents the degree of mismatch between the Sensor Signal and the Reference Value(s). Thus, the model predicts that if the Sensor Signal broadly

accords with the Reference Value(s) then any minimal Error Signal will precipitate only fine-tuning-type Action/Output. If, on the other hand, the Benchmarking reveals a large discrepancy between the Sensor Signal and the Reference Value(s) [what the person would prefer/expect/desire etc.] then the Error Signal will mobilize a commensurately-calibrated response. You will note that I have drawn an arrow from the Error Signal (4) to Inner Goings-on. Here I suggest that an Error Signal - depending on its magnitude - adds to a person's 'noticeable' Inner Goings-On, such that the Sensing Function may proprioceptively register, say, an adrenalin rush, which, in turn, further enriches the Sensor Signal.

You will note, also, that some of the Action/Output triggered by the Error Signal may get directed back into the person. This, for example, may relate to homeostatic processes which continue out of the awareness of the person. For example, Reference Values exist for different essential biological processes, such that, if an out-of-awareness sensor registers a lower-than-required-for-health level of, say, blood sugar, then, the Output function will set in motion remedial action which corrects for the imbalance indicated by the Error Signal. [See chapter 5]

If the perceived source of the Error Signal resides in the ENVIRONMENT, then a person my choose to act on [control] environmental variables (V's) (6a), through the Output function, such that the Sensing Function (1) has a now-modified configuration of variables to draw on, resulting in a modified Sensor Signal. The inner-directed Experiencing/Sensing - whether introspective or proprioceptive - may now also augment/modify the Sensor Signal. I define so-called 'introspection' as sensing nominally focused on 'thoughts' and 'feelings'; I define proprioception as, for example, the physiological sensing of bodily

processes, such as feeling thirsty, or needing to go to the toilet. In the case of a dry tongue or a full bladder the Sensing function registers physiological phenomena. In the case of 'thoughts' and 'feelings' Ducasse argues that putative mental contents do not exist independently of the thinking and feeling processes that sponsor them - no thinking no thoughts. The full-bladder and the dry tongue exist independently of whether a person registers them, but so-called 'thoughts' and 'feelings' cannot exist independently of momentary thinking or feeling (Ducasse 1951, pp. 246-290 [Chapter 13]).

That brings us back, full-circle. The experiactional loop, depicted in Figure 12.2, constitutes a continuous-till-death process. The five regulable variables that I have identified ('access', 'configuration', 'levels', 'association', and 'expression') represent, in a general fashion, the whole gamut of phenomena that a person may act on whilst experiacting.

* * *

The following quote, from John (1976), nicely encapsulates the process of experiaction that I have just described.

> Consciousness is a process in which information about multiple individual modalities of sensation and perception are combined into a unified, multi-dimensional representation of the state of the system and its environment and is integrated with information about memories and the needs of the organism, generating emotional reactions and programs of behavior to adjust the organism to its environment.

I wish to highlight three aspects of this definition. First, "information about multiple individual modalities of sensation and perception are combined into a unified, multi-dimensional

representation of the state of the system and its environment". Here the fruits of the various sensing activities of a person get combined into a complex Sensor Signal which, in toto, represents the perceived state of the 360°-"inner'-'outer'-'field'. Second, this complex internal analog - the Sensor Signal - gets "integrated with information about memories and the needs of the organism". This corresponds with the Benchmarking stage in my diagram (Fig. 12.2), where the "memories and the needs of the organism" take the place of the Reference Value(s) in my diagram. The Sensor Signal thus 'meets' the Reference Value(s) and the resultant 'integrated' signal gives a measure of the degree of match/mismatch between the perceived state of the 'field' (Sensor Signal) and the "memories and the needs of the organism" (Reference Value[s]). And thirdly, the comparing of the two 'signals' (Sensor and Reference) generates "emotional reactions and programs of behavior to adjust the organism to its environment". This corresponds to the Error Signal in Figure 12.2, which drives the Output function. Depending on the outcome of the 'meeting' between the Sensor Signal and the Reference Value(s), a person will either feel satisfied with the perceived 'state of play' or will, to the contrary, feel dissatisfied, such that s/he acts to remedy the perceived shortfall between the perceived state of play and what his/her current knowledge and objectives lead him/her to expect. Immediately-subsequent "programs of behavior" thus lead (if successful) to a more satisfactory-to-self accord between the subsequent-to-remedial-behaviour Sensor Signal and the person's needs and wants (as represented by the Reference Values) when the two next meet.

12.7 'Behavior Settings' Revisited

Only one matter remains unaddressed here. In section 5.4 I introduced the notion of 'behavior settings'. According to the proponents of ecological psychology the micro-environments that an individual spends time in, such as schools, cinemas, and restaurants, have their own programs of operation to maintain. Thus, with the help of those charged with running such systems, any goings-on which deviate from the, respective, behavior-setting-programs will get corrected. And so, although my diagram (Fig. 12.2) focuses on the level of the individual, the system that encompasses the individual may abide by a different set of aims and objectives - Reference Values that run contrary to what a setting-encompassed individual would prefer. Thus I might prefer to drive faster - without getting a fine - than the speed-camera-policed system seeks to determine. Daily life, then, comprises of a ongoing negotiation between living creatures - and between living creatures and their encompassing systems - in which the various constituent 'systems' and sub-systems often 'behave' according to divergent Reference Values. This, then, goes some way to accounting for the commonplace conflict(s) that we witness.

12.8 Concluding

This chapter constitutes something of a drawing-together and a consolidation of the material in previous chapters. In a sense I feel that I have sung my song with regard to experiaction. And yet I have one more topic to address which, in Gestalt theory terms, constitutes an 'unfinished gestalt' - what we more commonly refer to as 'unfinished business'. As Fritz Perls (1973, pp. 7-8) puts it:

> The healthy organism seems to operate within what we might call a hierarchy of values. Since it is unable to do more than one thing properly at a time, it attends to the dominant survival need before it attends to any of the others; it operates on the principle of first things first. […]
>
> Formulating this principle in terms of Gestalt psychology, we can say that the dominant need of the organism, at any time, becomes the foreground figure, and the other needs recede, at least temporarily, into the background. The foreground is that need which presses most sharply for satisfaction, whether the need is […] physiological or psychological. […]
>
> For the individual to satisfy his needs, to close the gestalt, to move on to other business, he must be able to sense what he needs and he must know how to manipulate himself and his environment, for even the purely physiological needs can only be satisfied through the interaction of the organism and the environment.

And so, in a spirit of addressing and expressing whatever becomes insistently fore-grounded in consciousness - on the understanding that such 'material' needs dealing with - I present the following chapter for my sense of closure, and, I hope, for your interest.

Chapter 13: Concluding Chapter

On the 11th October 2010 at 08:57 Rose (2010) said:

> I get that you don't want to call people consumers and what they do consumption. What are you recommending as substitutes?

On 11th October 2010 at 10:00 Michael Dawson [the Author of *The Consumer Trap* (2003)] replied:

> […] When people are shopping, call them "shoppers." When people are watching TV, call them "viewers." When people are using a product, call them "users" of the product in question. When discussing people's collective product-related interests, call them "product users." The overall idea is to always adopt the term that conveys the actual process and intention under examination. […]

So, instead of using the blanket term 'consumption' Dawson advocates a more careful focus on context-specific actions.

Margolis (1960, p. 209) cares, too, about the specificity of verbs:

> We seem to "watch" dramas and dances, to "listen" to music and the recital of poetry, to "look at" paintings and sculptures, to "read" literature. And these automatic adjustments in our language serve, I believe, as warnings about the complexities of what we choose to speak of, in a compressed way, as the "perception" of a work of art.

Thus Margolis sees the imprecision in using the collective noun 'perception' to describe the many different acts involved when engaging with different art forms. It seems that Margolis wants to do to the noun 'perception' what Dawson wants to do to the noun 'consumption', namely, to drop it in order to encourage more nuanced descriptions.

Roberts (1933, pp. 265-266) writes:

> Organisms, we ought to say, sense, perceive, and conceive. Nouns [such as 'sensations', 'perceptions', or 'ideas'] serve to summarize these processes.

Roberts, too, argues for de-nominalising - turning abstract nouns back into verbs - in order to achieve more specific, less general, representations of what human beings do.

Woodbridge (1936, p. 563) discusses another summarising term with a bearing on the discussion here:

> […] it seems clear enough to us today as it was clear enough to the ancients, that being conscious, if it requires further specification, is seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling; thinking about what we see, hear, taste, smell, and feel; and expressing the result in language of some sort. This is what being conscious is, and no philosopher has ever delivered anything more, be he ancient, medieval, or modern.

The noun 'consciousness', then, serves as a summarising term for all of the constituent sensory acts.

Roberts (1941, p. 543) also expresses concern about how our ongoing experiencing can become objectified through language:

> […] consider experience, in all its forms, not a *thing* to be denoted properly by a noun but as an activity or process that can not without serious error be arrested and fixed in the immobility of a substantive but must be denoted by a verb. I use the term "experience" only because it seems the most inclusive term available. I would include within it every possible form of consciousness, every degree or variety of knowledge or emotion.

Roberts wants us to treat all forms of experiencing as active processes. The verb 'consume', for some, has become a verb that summarises a host of human activities. Once we embrace the consumption metaphor, then, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling, all become acts through which we consume what the world has to offer us. Thus instead of watching a TV programme we consume it. Instead of looking at a painting we may consume it. The verb 'consume', then, has, in consumer research and beyond, become something of a catch-all term that may substitute for more nuanced, context-specific, verbs.

Gil-Juárez (2009, pp. 852, 853) writes:

> Consumption is no longer a trivial relation between a person and the objects that the person possesses but a fundamental relation by which subjects define themselves as consumers and the rest of the world as objects of consumption.

Gil-Juárez, here, ups the ante by suggesting that the language we use can inform our whole world-view and, implicitly, our conduct.

Graeber (2011, pp. 491, 502) effectively particularises Gil-Juárez's more broadly-expressed concern:

> Imagine, for example, four teenagers who decide to form a band. They scare up some instruments, teach themselves to play, write songs, come up with an act, and practice long hours in the garage. Now it seems reasonable to see such behavior as production of some sort or another, but if one takes the common de facto definition [of 'consumption'] to its logical conclusion, it would be much more likely to be placed in the sphere of consumption simply because they did not themselves manufacture the guitars. […] Why does the fact that manufactured goods are involved in an activity automatically come to define its very nature? […] Any production not for the market is treated as a form of consumption, which has the incredibly reactionary political

> effect of treating almost every form of unalienated experience we do engage in as somehow a gift granted by the captains of industry.

Interestingly, Graeber uses the term 'production' to describe what the youngsters do. I would have expected him - given his stance against 'commercial speak' - to have used the noun 'creation'.

Philip Kotler, (2005, p. 115) concluding his retrospective article on the broadening of the application of marketing thought into domains such as museums and churches, writes:

> All said, the invasion of marketing into the non-commercial arena has been a drama laden with setbacks, oppositions, and victories, but the general consensus is that broadening marketing has been good for marketing and good for the areas that marketing has invaded.

I find it breathtaking that Kotler uses two variants of the word 'invade' to describe the encroachment of marketing thought into 'softer' domains. This issue of the pervasive incorporation of the logic and vocabulary of marketing (specifically 'consumption experiences') clearly goes to the heart of this thesis.

So, what has the world come to? I think that we have crossed a line when we blithely accept the rebranding of our subjectivity as 'consumption experience'. In the case of the hypothetical garage band, described by Graeber above, all of the fine-detailed particulars of what the young people engage in may, in a worst-case scenario, become lumped together under the rubric of 'consumption'.

What, exactly, does it mean to consume something? [In asking this question I do not intend to revisit the issues covered in my

literature review; here I have a different issue in my sights.] You will note that the very phrasing of the question sets a trap for those who would seek to answer it. The transitive verb 'consume' demands a 'direct object' to act upon. The term 'to consume' presupposes 'a consumable' that the consumer consumes in the act of consuming. To consume food makes absolute sense; to use the verb 'consume' to summarise the acts of eating and drinking would not, I suggest, perturb many people. Similarly, speaking in terms of, say, consuming a movie, where the movie becomes a metaphorical feast for the eyes and ears, seems OK to me; we know where we stand - we use the term consume figuratively.

So where do I draw the line? In this concluding chapter I began by quoting a number of academics who, independently, chose to discuss such processes as sensing, thinking, and feeling, and how such acts may, in common usage, become nominalised to become sensations, thoughts, and feelings, respectively. Melser (2004, p. 194) develops this notion still further by providing a non-exhaustive list of mental nouns:

> *thought, belief, desire, concept, intention, emotion, feeling, fear, admiration, doubt, memory, heed, hope, attention, recognition, cognition, decision, opinion, anticipation, grief, regret, purpose.*

We may think of such 'objects' as the 'food' ingested during so-called "psychological consumption" (Ariely and Norton 2009, p. 477); although I prefer to think in terms of 'psychological/phenomenological' consuming, given the 'touchy-feely' nature of 'psychological' phenomena. Melser (2004, p. 194) goes on to make the point that, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, all of the above-listed nouns derive, "from the corresponding verbs": think, believe, desire, conceptualise, intend,

'feel emotion', feel, fear, admire, doubt, remember, heed, hope, attend, recognise, cognise, decide, opine, anticipate, grieve, regret, and purpose. Unlike the 'objects' consumed in 'literal' consumption - namely items of food and drink - and the 'figurative' consumption of, say, a movie, psychological/phenomenological consuming putatively entails the consumption of phenomena unavailable for direct inter-subjective inspection. Muysken (1994, p. 2812) refers to the process by which a verb (such as to 'consume') gets transformed into a noun (such as 'consumption') as 'action' or 'process' nominalization. Melser (2004, p. 189) calls the same transformation "*act nominalization*". The act/verb 'consuming' becomes the noun 'consumption'. The noun 'consumption' refers to the practice of consuming in general, or to particular instances of consuming, but not to the 'live' act itself. Melser (2004, p. 189) refers to this type of nominalization as looking at actions in "quasi-objective ways". Melser's list of nominalised verbs of mental conduct, points to the way that talk about mental acts often includes talk about 'things', like 'feelings', 'doubts' and 'thoughts'. But what does it mean to consume, say, a thought or a sensation?

* * *

I recognise that this discussion has taken us away from the experiactional model - that I elaborated in the previous chapter, and which I have argued for throughout this thesis (as an alternative way of thinking about processes that we might, otherwise, think of as 'consumption experiences') - but I persist with it in the interest of showing how, in spite of its widespread use, 'consumption speak' begins to falter when closely inspected.

* * *

Let us imagine consuming the process of thinking; how might one go about doing that? The thinking putatively constitutes a consumable phenomenon, but who does the consuming? When we consume food, and/or a movie, the food and the movie exist independently of us - someone else can consume the food if we don't want it, and others can concurrently watch the same movie. But no one else can consume our unexpressed thinking and feeling. But can we consume our own unexpressed thinking and feeling? We may think self-watchingly, but this does not mean the same as 'watching a thought'. To think self-watchingly means engaging in one specified type of process, namely, thinking in a self-watching manner. By replacing the term 'watching a thought' with the alternative 'thinking self-watchingly' we have demonstrated an approach to 'mental-talk' which does not require a commitment to the existence of mental objects. To feel fearingly means to feel in a certain way, but feeling fearingly does *not* mean that one feels a thing called 'fear' - as in 'I feel fear'. Suffice it to say, here, that a philosophical orientation called 'adverbial theory' exists that enables us to challenge the objectification of the subjective realm. [See Ducasse (1942), and Ducasse (1951, especially chapter 13)]

If we employ the verb 'introspect', the notion of optical/perceptual looking gets transferred to a putative inner landscape. Since we readily accept seeing as a form of metaphorical consuming, as in 'taking in' a vista, then we need only cross a, seemingly, narrow threshold to apply the same metaphorical logic to inner-directed looking - or introspection. Thus we start with the LOOKING-AS-A-FORM-OF-EATING metaphor [consuming landscapes] and progress to the MONITORING-ONE'S-OWN-THINKING/FEELING-AS-A-FORM-OF-LOOKING metaphor [introspection]. Some key philosophical questions - and potential candidates for future research - become: If we can, and do, introspect, does the thinking and feeling that the

act of introspection espies exist independently of the act of introspecting? Do we have a two-tier system, where a complete process of thinking (as a whole) becomes the fodder for a 2nd tier inner-consumer of inner goings-on? And if that 2nd tier inner-consumer looks at the first tier goings-on, does that 2nd tier inner-consumer have 'responses' to what s/he 'sees'? Does a 3rd tier inner-snooper espy the inner goings-on occurring within the 2nd tier introspector etc?

These philosophical questions must remain unanswered here. But at least I now know that an alternative exists to the kind of metaphysical quagmire that I have just mooted. Following Thomasson (2000, p. 190) we can either opt for (a) "higher-order views of consciousness, according to which an act is made conscious in virtue of a second-order mental act directed towards it", or (b) for an "intrinsic or one-level theor[y], according to which consciousness is an intrinsic feature of those mental states that have it, not something that must be bestowed on them by some further act". This distinction seems crucial for my purpose here. Thomasson (2000, p. 190) restates the one-level-theory-of-consciousness premise saying, "[…] the (secondary) awareness should be considered as an aspect of the original mental act itself".

Seen from the perspective of a one-level theory of consciousness, one doesn't consume a 'thought' or a 'feeling' but, rather, one thinks self-watchingly or feels self-awarely. We need not posit 'thoughts' and 'feelings' that a 2nd tier sole-trading introspector consumes. We have only unitary acts of thinking and feeling, undertaken in specified ways, for example, self-watchingly and self-awarely. And, importantly, returning to the theme of 'psychological consumption', if we don't have 'thoughts' and 'feelings' which we consume, but, instead, have only manifold modes of thinking and

feeling, then the 'food supply' of the putative inner consumer evaporates, and the thinker-feeler self-monitors his/her present-tense thinking and feeling - s/he thinks self-monitoringly - just one act of thinking with no mental object(s). I present this as an unprovable, yet suggestive, way of thinking. I have 'simply' applied extant theory to the topic of consuming. I leave the final word on this theme to Gilbert Ryle (1949, pp. 163, 164, 165) who sums up parts of what I have discussed:

> It was supposed that much as a person may at a particular moment be listening to a flute, savouring a wine, or regarding a waterfall, so he may be 'regarding', in a non-optical sense, some current mental state or process of his own. The state or process is being deliberately and attentively scrutinised and so can be listed among the objects of his observation. […] [T]he occurrence of such an act of inner perception would require that the observer could attend to two things at the same time. […] But many people who begin by being confident that they do introspect, as introspection is officially described, become dubious that they do so, when they are satisfied that they would have to be attending twice at once in order to do it. They are more sure that they do not attend twice at once than that they do introspect.

Coda

To cut a long story short, studying 'experience' - whether a 'consumption experience' or simply an 'experience' - seems an impossible task, since the damn 'thing' doesn't sit still long enough for us to paint its portrait. And when you think you've trapped it, and you put it in a zoo for all to see, people come along in their droves to see your caged raw experience. And when, after a long wait, they reach the front of the queue, and they come face-to-face with your raw, caged, experience, what happens? They host their own experiencing whilst apprehending yours. And do you then try to capture their experience? Come off it. It becomes a tail-chasing

exercise. So what do we do? We do what we can and hope for the best. And what can I do? You have it in front of you.

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